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THE  
**Theological and Miscellaneous**  
**WORKS,**  
&c.  
OF  
**JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F.R.S. &c.**

WITH  
*NOTES,*  
BY THE EDITOR,

---

**VOLUME XIII.**

Containing

**Notes on the New Testament.**

THE  
Geological and Miscellaneous

WORKS

OF

OF

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, F.R.S.

WITH

NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

VOLUME XIII.

Containing

Notes on the New Testament



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**PREFACE**

**BY THE EDITOR.**

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**DR. PRIESTLEY**, in his Preface, (Vol. XI. p. 8,) mentioned that he had "taken the paraphrases on the discourses of Jesus" from his *Harmony of the Gospels*, and that he had inserted in the *Notes on the Four Evangelists*, which form the largest part of this volume, "the few Notes that were subjoined to that work." To these, in the interval of more than twenty years, he had made, as might have been expected from such an unremitting biblical student, very considerable additions.

In preparing the present volume for the press, I have felt still more than on former occasions, the duty of occupying as usefully as circumstances would allow, the office which I had ventured to undertake. In this employment, while strictly preserving all that the Author had left for publication, I have been obliged to transpose a large number of the *Notes* to the *Harmony*, which were placed, perhaps from mis-arrangement as the MSS. passed through the press, out of that order which was evidently the Author's design, as appears from his own arrangement of the *text* of the Evangelists in his *English Harmony* of 1780. I have also added from that *Harmony* a variety of Notes, most of which were, probably, omitted by accident. They all appeared to me to be worthy of preservation, as suited to the Author's purpose of biblical information, and their insertion was indeed necessary to the completion of my plan. I have, however, distinguished them from those of the *Northumberland* edition.

Had my Author lived to publish that edition, he would, I am persuaded, have repeated the acknowledgments which he had made in the Preface to the *English Harmony*, in 1780. Though that preface will appear in a subsequent volume, I cannot forbear here to record the names of *Jebb*, *Dodson*, and especially of *Turner*. With these Dr. Priestley enjoyed the interchanges of the purest friendship. They were united also by a common desire to explain and recommend that *pure and undefiled religion before God, even the Father*, of which they appear among the most enlightened and exemplary professors, to all who are not prevented by ignorance or prejudice from appreciating their characters.

To the *Greek Harmony*, published in 1777, and the *English* in 1780, was prefixed a Dedication to the Author's friend, Dr. Price, who left the world, which he had so much benefited by the labours and the example of his life, several years before Dr. Priestley. That *Dedication* will appear in a subsequent volume, accompanied with the *Critical Dissertations* originally annexed to the *Harmony*.

In preparing this volume I have been solicitous, as in editing the former volumes, to offer the Biblical student whatever references occurred to me. Through the *Harmony* I have mentioned the pages in the professed Commentators, but in the remainder of the volume their names sufficiently distinguish their remarks *on the place*.

J. T. RUTT.

Clapton, September 29, 1819.



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**NOTES**  
ON ALL  
**THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE,**  
FOR THE USE OF THE  
**Pulpit and Private Families.**

---

Si juxta apostolum Paulum Christus Dei virtus est, Deique sapientia, et qui nescit Scripturas nescit Dei virtutem ejusque sapientiam, ignoratio Scripturarum ignoratio Christi est.

*Jerom in Esaïam.*

---

[*Northumberland, 1804.*]





# NOTES

ON THE

## NEW TESTAMENT.



### THE INTRODUCTION.

WE are now entering on the consideration of the most important and interesting of all histories, that of Jesus Christ, from whom we, who believe his divine mission, and profess ourselves to be his followers, are denominated *Christians*. We cannot, therefore, give too much attention to the incidents of his life, and to all his discourses; especially as he declared that the words which he spake were not his own, and that the Father, who was in him, performed the miraculous works by which his divine mission was attested.

Jesus was a Jew, and the Jewish or Hebrew nation was a people eminently distinguished by Almighty God, as the medium of almost all his communications to mankind; all the prophets, except *Balaam*, having been of that nation. And the history of Jesus is the more extraordinary, as the Jews had been without any prophet, or any person pretending to prophecy, about four hundred years before the appearance of *John the Baptist*, who announced the coming of Jesus as a prophet greatly superior to himself; his own mission being only introductory to that of Jesus.

At the time of the public appearance of Jesus, the Jews were in a state of subjection to the Romans, not having the power of life and death,\* and being governed by Roman officers, residing at Cæsarea, but who attended at Jerusalem at the three great festivals; at which time there was always a great concourse of people in that city.

With respect to the religious state of the country, the

\* See a contrary opinion by *Mann*, in his *Dissertations* on "the True Years of the Birth and of the Death of Christ," 1733, pp. 13—19. This subject is fully discussed by *Lardner*, l. pp. 45—54.

Jews were divided into two great sects, the *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees*; of whom the former, which consisted of the bulk of the people, and especially the more religious of them, were firm believers in a resurrection; whereas the latter, who were in general the richest, and also the more profligate,\* disbelieved that great article of faith. The Pharisees also held many traditions which had been added to the laws of Moses, and were the foundation of much superstition; and an attention to supernumerary duties derived from this source, took off from their attention to the moral precepts of the law.

But the most remarkable circumstance in the state of the Jewish nation at the time of Christ's appearance, was their expectation of the *Messiah*, a person announced by the prophet *Daniel* [vii. 13] under the character of *the Son of Man*, who was to come in the clouds of heaven, and to whom God would give a kingdom that should have no end.

It was also generally understood to be foretold that the Messiah should be *cut off*, and that his appearance was to be seventy weeks, or (as the Jews themselves interpret it,) four hundred and ninety years, after an order (which must have been given by some of the kings of Persia) to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.† The Jews must therefore have been sensible this time was expired about the time of Jesus; and in fact, overlooking what was said about his being to be *cut off*, which they might think to have some figurative meaning, the whole nation of the Jews, though in a more flourishing and happy state under the Romans than under any of their own princes since the Babylonish Captivity, bore with great impatience their subjection to foreigners, and eagerly expected the appearance of their Messiah, who they thought would rescue them from their subjection; and

\* I know not on what authority the Author has given this opinion. *Josephus*, who was a *Pharisee*, brings no such charge against the rival sect; though he frequently mentions them as opposed to the *Pharisees*. He says, according to *Whiston*, (*War*, B. ii. Ch. viii. Sect. xiv.) that "they take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades." He also represents them as unsocial, even among themselves, when compared with the *Pharisees*, and severe in the exaction of capital punishments. In another place (*Antiq.* B. xiii. Ch. x. Sect. vi.) he describes them as maintaining "that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word; but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers." Thus they are distinguished from the *Pharisees*, who "delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses." The language which Jesus held towards *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, during his ministry, and the terms in which he described them, were scarcely consistent with the opinion that the *Sadducees* were then the more profligate sect.

† See Vol. XII. pp. 332—334.



many of them, from the prohibition in the laws of Moses (*Deut. xvii. 15*) to make themselves a king of any but one of their own nation, considered subjection to foreigners to be unlawful; and some time before Christ's appearance in a public character, there had been a rebellion in the country, headed by *Judas*, surnamed *Gaulonites*, on this very account, and much blood had been shed in the suppression of it.\*

The life of Jesus was written by four persons generally called *Evangelists*, of whom two, *Matthew* and *John*, were apostles, and the other two, *Mark* and *Luke*, early disciples. *Mark*, the son of Barnabas's sister, was the companion of Paul and Barnabas in their first journey to preach the gospel, but afterwards he is supposed to have attached himself more particularly to the apostle Peter; and he was certainly well informed concerning the history which he undertook to write. *Luke* was a physician of Antioch, the companion of Paul in his later travels, and probably also well acquainted with the other apostles. In the introduction to his gospel he mentions his ability to collect and arrange the most authentic accounts that he could collect for his undertaking.

*Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, are said to have written their gospels about A. D. 64, when written accounts of the life of Christ would be particularly wanted, as the great actors in the scene were then going off the stage, and the principal church at Jerusalem was about to be broken up, and the members of it dispersed, by the approaching Jewish war.

*John* wrote after the rest, and is said to have intended his gospel to be a supplement to the others, which being composed when he was old, and being probably written in detached parts, was perhaps put together by other persons.†

\* See *Jos. Antiq.* B. i. Ch. i. Sect. i. vi.; B. xx. Ch. v. Sect. ii.; *War*, B. ii. Ch. viii. Sect. i.

† On the *Four Gospels*, among numerous works which might be mentioned, see Socinus's *Libellus de Sacra Scriptura Auctoritate*, translated in 1732, by a Clergyman of the Church of England; Father Simon's "Critical History of the Text of the New Testament," 1689, pp. 39—126; *Lardner*, VI. pp. 31—234; Dr. Williams's "Free Inquiry into the Authenticity of the First and Second Chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel," 1771; Mr. Evanson's "Dissonance of the generally received Evangelists," first published in 1792, and the Controversy that publication occasioned.

*Socinus's* piece is entitled by his translator, "A Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion." Bishop Smallbrook, in his "Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of St. David's," while he could not fail to brand the author, *ex cathedra*, as a "writer otherwise justly of ill fame," relates, that by "Faustus Socinus's little book, *Grotius*, in his book 'On the Truth of the Christian Religion,' was especially assisted." My friend Dr. T. Rees has lately described Socinus's treatise as scarce and worthy of an improved translation. See *Racovian Catechism*, 1818, pp. 9—11, *Note*.




The greatest part of his gospel consists of discourses and incidents not recorded by any of the other evangelists, but other parts are very circumstantial details of events related by them; being perhaps taken from his mouth before he had seen the other gospels; and in some cases in which his account differs from that of the other evangelists, he seems to have intended to be more exact than they were.

The style of John is very peculiar, and highly figurative, and he represents our Saviour as using a language, of which we should have had no idea from the writings of the other evangelists. On this account, his gospel and his other writings are difficult to be understood.

Though we have only four original writers of the life of Jesus, the evidence of the history does not rest on the testimony of four men. Christianity had been propagated in a great part of the world before any of them had written, on the testimony of thousands and tens of thousands, who had been witnesses of the great facts which they have recorded; so that the writing of these particular books is not to be considered as the *cause*, but rather the *effect*, of the belief of Christianity; nor could those books have been written and received as they were, viz. as authentic histories, of the subject of which all persons of that age were judges, if the facts they have recorded had not been well known to be true.

Two of the gospels, viz. those of Luke and John, have *introductions*, or observations previous to their entering on the history, that of Luke being designed to shew his competency to the undertaking, and that of John indirectly animadverting on some opinions concerning the person of Christ, which were very prevalent at the time of his writing, and which seem to have been the occasion of all that he wrote. I shall begin with that of Luke.



THE  
HARMONY  
OF  
THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.\*

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SECTION I.

*The Introduction to the Gospels of Luke and John.†*

*Luke i. 1—4; John i. 1—18.*

**LUKE** i. 1. From this it appears that there were in a very early period many imperfect accounts of the life of Jesus; nor can we wonder at this, when we consider how very important the events of it were, and that it was an age in which the art of writing was very common. Numbers, no doubt, would take down what they had heard the apostles and other eye-witnesses relate concerning the discourses and the miracles of Jesus; and some, willing to have their accounts correct, would naturally subject them to the inspection of those from whom they had received them, and of others who were equally acquainted with the facts; and the written relations of facts and discourses so authenticated, could not fail to gain the greatest credit; and might even be adopted by those who compiled the

\* Published in *Greek* 1776; in *English* 1780. To those editions were prefixed a *Dedication* to Dr. Price, *Prefaces* and *Observations*. These will appear in a subsequent volume.

† "The application of the word *saint* to the evangelists, apostles, and other celebrated men of the Christian church, is an ignorant device of some in later times, who have not been sufficiently aware of the true import of this term. Every Christian indiscriminately was denominated in the days of the apostles, a *saint* or *holy* person: and this title was intended merely as a general and political appellation, in contradistinction to the word *Gentile* or *Heathen*, who was called in a civil sense, *unholy* and *unrighteous*; one who was not under the revealed covenant of God—one who was not a professor of Christianity. This is a point very well known to all who have the least acquaintance with the epistolary writings of the New Testament, and, which it would be superfluous to insist upon, if the gross misapplication of scripture terms that respect only external distinctions, to the religious character of Christians, had not rendered some explanation necessary to rectify an error existing even at this day." *Wakefield's "New Translation of Matthew, with Notes Critical, Philological and Explanatory."* Warrington, 1782, p. 2.

larger and more complete accounts that we call the *Gospels*. As Luke passes no censure on these histories, except that they were *imperfect*, they were probably such accounts as these, collected by well-meaning persons, and put together perhaps without a due regard to method. Indeed the spurious gospels were not written so early, but in imitation of the *four*, which are generally received.

It is on this principle (which appears to me a very natural one) that I account for the great similarity between some accounts of the same transactions in the different gospels, and especially the placing together things which had no natural connexion; for I cannot think that any of the evangelists, except John, had seen what had been written by any of the others. Their differences with respect to order, and small circumstances, are too great to allow us to suppose that they copied or abridged one another. They were all sufficiently well qualified to write, without that assistance; and none of them being very forward to write, they would probably have thought their labour superseded if they had seen any other gospel.

4. It is obvious to remark, that the evangelist does not claim any inspiration, but that he merely professes to write from materials collected with care from those whom he thought to be best informed of the transactions he was about to relate.

His work is addressed to *Theophilus*, of whom we know nothing more than his name; but he was probably a person of eminence in the Christian church, who had expressed a desire of having a full account of the history of Jesus from *Luke*, whom he knew to be well qualified to give it.

*John* i. 1. I have observed that the phraseology of John is peculiar to himself, and it is no where more so than in this introduction to his Gospel. In order to understand it, and see the propriety of it, we must attend to the state of things at the time in which he wrote, and this we may easily collect from his epistles. The professed object of them was, to oppose the doctrine of the *Gnostics*, which was very prevalent before this apostle died, or to prove that *Jesus* and *the Christ* was the same person, and that Jesus had real flesh and blood, like other men, and was not merely man in appearance. The former of these all the *Gnostics* denied, and the latter, some of them: for they held that *the Christ* was a super-angelic being, who entered into *Jesus* at his baptism, and many of them said that Jesus had only the outward appearance of a man, and that he was



incapable of feeling pain, or of dying, which they thought to be unworthy of his dignity. For, the first corruptions of the Christian doctrine were introduced on the idea of magnifying the person of Christ, many persons objecting to Christianity on account of the meanness of its founder.

That John wrote his gospel, as well as his epistles, with a view to counteract these doctrines, is evident from his declaration at the close of it (*Chap. xx. 31*): "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." This is the very language of his epistles, in which it unquestionably was his object to oppose the *Gnostic* doctrines. To me it is evident that the peculiar phraseology of this introduction was owing to his alluding to the terms made use of in the Gnostic system, and his shewing in what sense they may be adopted by Christians.

The *Gnostics*, agreeably to the philosophy of the times, supposed that all spirits were emanations from the Supreme Mind, or something emitted from his substance, like light from the sun; for the idea of *creation out of nothing* was universally disclaimed by those who were called philosophers. They also said that the Supreme Mind dwelt in what they called the *πληρωμα*, which is literally rendered *fulness*, without the bounds of which resided the divine emanations, to which some of them gave the name of *Æons*. Of these *Æons* they enumerated a great number, describing their mutual relation, and the production of some of them from others in a regular succession, or generation, like the genealogies of men. They were also particularly distinguished by a number of different names, some of which were *life, light, grace, truth, only-begotten*, and *logos*, which we translate, *the word*; all of which the evangelist shews might be mediately or immediately applied to Christ.

This part of their doctrine was peculiarly fanciful, and the apostle Paul frequently speaks of them with indignation and contempt, (*1 Tim. i. 4*; *Tit. iii. 9*.) as *endless genealogies* and *old wives' fables*.

Considering the object of *John* in writing his Gospel, as well as his epistles, there is a peculiar propriety in his introduction, though it has been grossly misunderstood, and has occasioned more misapprehension of the principles of the gospel, than any other part of the New Testament.

*John* might think it more necessary to give his ideas of the proper use of the term *Logos*, in consequence of the philosophizing Jews, like *Philo*, making use of it as syno-

nymous to the *vous* of *Plato*, thereby accommodating the language of their Scriptures to the Platonic philosophy. Philo wrote long before the apostle John, and therefore it is possible that he might have seen or heard of his writings.

The Gnostics did not say that their *Logos* was the *Christ*, and therefore John had no occasion to say expressly that he was not; but as both Philo and the Gnostics maintained that the *Logos* was inferior to the Supreme Being, it might naturally give him occasion to say that when that term was used properly, it signified nothing more than that *word* or *power* of God by which all things were made, and therefore was no distinct or inferior principle, but God himself.

The proper meaning of the phrase *with God*, *προς τον Θεον*, seems to be *was God's*, or what belonged to him. Thus what we render *Psalms* l. 11, the wild beasts of the field are *mine*, is in Hebrew עמרי, and in the LXX. is rendered με' εμου, which is equivalent to *προς με*. But I do not lay much stress on this interpretation.

3. This is thought by many to be a proof of the divinity of Christ; whereas the evangelist says nothing even indirectly about Christ till the 11th verse of this chapter, nor expressly till the 17th, but speaks of that *power of God* which resided in Christ, so that in a figurative sense he was said to be *made flesh*. What is that *word* by which all things were made, we learn from the Old Testament, when we read, (*Psalms* xxxiii. 6, 9,) that "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.—He spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast." In this the Psalmist evidently alludes to Moses saying, *God said, let there be light, and there was light*, &c. The apostle, who was well acquainted with the Scriptures, could not mean to contradict them, as he must have done, had he intimated that any other than the Supreme Being himself made all things. He certainly alluded to the well-known language of the Scriptures.

The greatest misrepresentation of this passage had its origin with the Christian fathers of the third century, who, being willing to establish the doctrine of the *divinity* of Christ, and well knowing that it was not received in the time of the apostles, said, that in their time the minds of men, and especially those of the Jews, were not prepared to receive it, and for that reason insisted on nothing but the *humanity* of Christ, and his divine mission; but that



when the other apostles were dead, John was instructed in the higher and more sublime doctrines of his *pre-existence and divinity*. But John meant nothing more than to assert the divinity of that *power* by which Christ acted. Besides, is it credible that if the doctrines of the divinity and pre-existence of Christ had been true, the apostles would not have taught them from the first, and laid proportionable stress upon them? But they never could have had any suspicion of such doctrines being advanced by any Christians, so contrary were they to their ideas of the person and office of Christ.

When the *word*, or the *logos*, in this Introduction, is considered as being not a *person*, but a *property*, or *power*, viz. that of God, it will be necessary to refer to it by the pronoun *it*, and not by *him*, as in our translation, which was made on the idea of the *word* being *Christ*; and to persons accustomed to the English version, this will appear awkward. But this only arises from the genius of our language. In the original there is no distinction of that kind. At the eleventh verse, where the personification is peculiarly strong, it will be proper to substitute the word *God*, whose power it was, for the power itself.

9. May be rendered, *That was the true light, which coming into the world enlighteneth every man*. In this view the expression seems borrowed from our Lord's own words, *Chap. xii. 46*: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." Compare also the fourth verse of this chapter with *Chap. viii. 12*.\*

12. In the Jewish phraseology, *believing on a person's name* only means *believing in* the person, or thing, whose name it was, and therefore, if the *logos* had not been considered as personified, *believing in it* would have been the proper rendering of the phrase.

This phraseology is similar to that of our Lord to Nicodemus, *Chap. iii. 5, 6*: "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." The spirit means the spirit of God, or that power by which the miracles of Christ were wrought; and something that is called *baptism by the Holy Spirit*, was foretold by *John*, to be used by his successor.

\* Rev. Mr. Turner, of Wakefield. (P.) See the Author's acknowledgments to this excellent person and his grateful recollection of their friendship, in the "Preface to the English edition" of the *Harmony*.



The figurative language of being *born of God*, or *born of the Spirit*, seems intended to denote that change which the gospel would make in men, so great as to be called a new birth. As the former natural birth is said to be *of man*, or in the course of common generation, the latter is said to be *of God*. By the former we become the sons of man, by the latter, sons of God. By the former we are born to a short uncertain life, by the latter to an immortal and happy one; and as baptism, or washing, was used at the natural birth, another baptism was used at this second or new birth; and besides being baptized with water, the Christians, in the age in which Christianity was propagated, received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and this was called a *baptism with the Spirit*.

The same idea is expressed by the term *creation*, as by *birth*. We are said to be *created anew* by the gospel; and as Christ is at the head of the Christian dispensation, this *second* or new creation is ascribed to Christ, as the *first* is ascribed to God. This language, which is beautifully figurative, but very intelligible, has contributed to the strange opinion of the original creation of the heavens and the earth being the work of Christ, than which no opinion is less probable or scriptural. Since it has been seen that, according to Moses and the psalmist after him, the speaking of a word (to express the facility with which the great work was performed) was sufficient for the production of all things, what occasion could there be to employ any secondary or intermediate agent?

14. *Only-begotten*. This phrase is often used to signify *best-beloved*, characterizing the child which is the object of that particular affection which is generally bestowed on an only son.

16. This verse, with what follows to the end of *ver.* 18, seems to be naturally connected with the fourteenth verse. Thus: The Word was flesh, and tabernacled among us—full of grace and truth. And of his fulness we all have received, even grace for, or *instead of*, grace. For the law (which was an important grace to the Jews) was given by Moses, but the *superior* grace and the truth were by Jesus Christ. *Particularly*: No man hath ever seen God; but the only-begotten Son who is *now received* into the bosom of the Father, he hath declared all that we needed to know concerning him.\*

15. Seems almost naturally to connect with the nineteenth verse. Probably this was its original and true place, out of which it hath been removed by the mistake of some very early copyists.\* These transpositions are observed in the paraphrase.

18. *In the bosom of the Father*: i. e. in the secret councils of God.

I shall endeavour to express the real sense of the evangelist, in this Introduction, in the following

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* i. (1.) From all eternity existed the *Logos*; of which you now hear so much, by which we are to understand, not what the Gnostics do, *a being distinct from God*, but an attribute of God; viz. his wisdom and power, and consequently, in fact, God himself. (2.) This attribute always belonged to God, (3.) and by it were all things created; every thing that exists being the production of divine power and skill. (4.) *Life*, of which the Gnostics speak, is only that which proceeds from this divine attribute or energy, and especially that light of instruction which God from time to time imparts to mankind, (5.) though it has often been greatly misapprehended and abused by them.

(6—9.) This light shone to us most distinctly through Jesus Christ, whose divine mission was witnessed by John the Baptist, who was not himself, as some now pretend, the true or principal light, (by professing which they avoid that persecution which falls upon us who acknowledge ourselves to be Christians,) but was sent to announce it to the world.

(10.) This divine light or power, which resided in an extraordinary manner in Christ, was the very same by which the world itself was made, but was not known or received in the world as such. (11.) Though, therefore, the world into which this divine power came was God's, he was rejected by it, and even by that nation which was, in a particular sense, his own. (12.) This censure, however, does not affect all. Some have received him, and by that means have become the sons of God, and thereby heirs of a resurrection to eternal life; (13.) to which privilege they are not entitled as the natural descendants of Abraham, or in consequence of having been incorporated with the Jewish nation, but they receive it by the good pleasure and grace of God.

(14.) This divine light was so eminently displayed in

\* See more, *Theol. Repos.* I. pp. 50—55; *Turner. (P.)* See also, *Theol. Repos.* I. pp. 295, 296; *Doddridge*, and *Bowyer's Nov. Test. Græc.*, 1763.



Christ, that it may be said that the *Logos*, or the divine wisdom and power, appeared in a *human form*, and dwelt among us ; so that from being invisible, as it necessarily is in the Divine Being himself, whose attribute it is, it became the object of our senses ; and from what we ourselves saw, especially on the Mount of Transfiguration, where his glory was more fully displayed, we were convinced that the glory could not be less than that of the *only-begotten* and best-beloved *Son of God*, (which the Gnostics distinguish into another divine emanation,) full of grace and truth. (16.) Of this fulness of grace and truth which was in him, we have received, viz. the grace of the gospel, after that of the law of Moses. (17.) For this fuller display of the divine grace, and this more abundant communication of divine truth, was reserved to the dispensation of the gospel. (18.) He it is who has come to shew us the Father, who himself is invisible ; for Christ having the most intimate communication with him, has declared to us all that is of importance for us to know concerning him.

(15.) It was to him that John referred, when he proclaimed, saying, This was he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me ; that is, my chief, and him to whom I am subservient. (19.) And when a solemn deputation was sent to him from the high-priest and Levites, he persisted in declaring that he was not himself the Christ, but one who was sent to prepare the way for him.\*

## SECTION II.

*The Genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew and Luke.*

*Matt. i. 1—17 ; Luke iii. 23—38.*

**MATT. i. 1.** The genealogy of Christ by Matthew is generally supposed to be that of Joseph, his reputed father ; and that given by Luke to be that of his mother Mary, whom one of the Jewish Rabbies calls the daughter of *Heli*. But according to *Eusebius*, it was a tradition in the family of Joseph that he was properly the *legal son* of Heli, who dying without children, his brother Jacob married his wife, and having a child by her it was transferred to Heli.

\* On this Section, see Lardner, *On the Logos* ; *Theol. Repos.* V. pp. 295—299, 385—396 ; *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 398—403 ; Lindsey's *Dissert.*, 1779, pp. 5—25 ; Cappe's *Crit. Rem.*, 1802, I. pp. 7—14, &c. ; *Improved Version*, Ed. 4, 1817, pp. 207—212.



If the genealogy of Matthew be compared with the corresponding genealogies of the Old Testament, it will be found to differ from them in several respects; \* but it is probable that it was such a genealogy as was generally allowed to be of authority, and it sufficiently proved the descent of Jesus from David.

8. *Joram begat Ozias.* Three kings of Judah, all descendants of David, are omitted in the genealogy; for Joram begat Ahaziah, Ahaziah begat Joash, Joash begat Amaziah, and Amaziah begat Uzziah, or Ozias. Whether this omission was in the record copied by Matthew, or was made by some early transcriber, is not known. If the former be the case, the seventeenth verse, which makes the generations between David and the Babylonish Captivity to be no more than fourteen, must, as bishop Pearce† observes, be an interpolation.

11. *Jechonias.* This, says *Pearce*,‡ seems to have been a mistake for *Jehoiakim*, who was the son of Josiah, and originally called *Eliakim*.§ And because some Greek MSS. read *Ιακωβ*, or *Ιωακωβ*, *Schmidius*, he says, conjectures that Matthew wrote the verse thus, *And Josiah begat Jehoiakim and his brethren*, (viz. Jehoahas and Zedekiah,) *and Jehoiakim begat Jechonias*, about the time that they were carried away to Babylon.

*Luke iii. 23: About thirty years of age.* Thirty years of age was the time fixed by the law for the priests and Levites entering upon their office.||

### SECTION III.

#### *The Conception of John the Baptist.*

*Luke i. 5—25.*

*LUKE i. 5: Of the course of Abia.* There were twenty-four families of priests, who officiated in their turns, a week

\* "The most suspicious circumstance in the first chapter of Matthew, is that cabalistical enumeration of the *fourteen* generations in the *three* intervals of time, *ver. 17*, a conceit not only unworthy of the gravity and simplicity of the historian, and dissimilar to every thing else in any of the gospels, but at the same time absolutely false and groundless: for whoever will trouble himself to enumerate the list, will find the last *ternary* of generations incomplete; not to mention that capital omission of *three* names in *ver. 9*. See 1 *Chron. iii. 11, 12*. The Jewish Rabbi, R. Isaac, in his *Munimen Fidei*, charges Matthew with insincerity for this omission, and calls it an artifice, to make his series of generations tally with each other." Wakefield in *Theol. Repos. V. pp. 189, 190*. See *Com. and Ess. II. pp. 455, 456*.

† "Commentary, with Notes," 1777, p. 2.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 3.

§ 2 *Chron. xxxvi. 4.* (P.)

|| *Numb. iv. 3.* (P.) See *Le Cene*, pp. 565—569.

at a time. That of Abia was the eighth in rank from the time of David.\*

10. Whilst the priests were offering incense, it was the custom for all present to be performing their private devotions. This appears from the history of Eli and Hannah, the mother of Samuel.† Hence prayer is compared to incense.

13. John is the same with *Johanan*, in the Old Testament, and signifies *a favour from God*.

15. *From his mother's womb*. This is a Jewish phrase, signifying *from early youth*. Thus David says he was *born in iniquity*; and the wicked are said *to go astray from the womb*.

17. *To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children*. As we frequently find the evangelists either quoting from memory, or bad translations, is it not adviseable to abide by the words of the original rather than of Luke, which, however, tend to explain Malachi? In Malachi, from whence this prophecy is taken, the words are, *he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers*. In Luke, *he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*. This latter clause in Luke answers to the latter in Malachi, and the sense of the whole may be thus: "He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, so that they shall reflect upon the probable misery of their posterity in consequence of the parents' crimes, agreeably to the doctrine of the second commandment, which threatens punishment even to the fourth generation; and affection for the children's prosperity shall thus be a guard to the parents' obedience; and also, He shall turn the disobedient children to imitate the wisdom and revere the counsels of those fathers that were worthy; and by both parties acting thus, the land, i. e. the country of Judea, will not be exposed to the just vengeance of heaven."‡

20. Dr. Shaw says, that the *ακριδες* which *John the Baptist* fed upon in the Wilderness, were properly *locusts*; and that, provided they appeared in the Holy Land during the Spring, as they did in Barbary, it may be presumed that John entered upon his ministry at that season of the year, and that this was the time of his shewing himself unto Israel. But the account in Luke rather leads us to consider that his feeding

\* 1 Chron. xxiv. 3, 4. (P.) See Vol. XI. pp. 494, 495.

† See 1 Sam. i. 12.

‡ Dr. Jebb. (P.) See *Malachi* iv. 6.



on locusts was prior to his public preaching, though possibly continued afterwards.

25. *To take away my reproach.* Barrenness was particularly reproachful among the Jews, being considered as a kind of curse.

## SECTION IV.

*The Conception of Jesus, and the Birth of John the Baptist.*

*Luke i. 26—57.*

**LUKE i. 32, 33:** *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.* Compare *Isa. ix. 6, 7*, where the words translated, *The mighty God, The everlasting Father*, may be rendered, *The mighty God my Father for ever.\**

34. *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* It is observable that Mary expresses no surprise that the Messiah should be born in the usual course of generation; as the common people had no notion of the pre-existence of souls, they could not have expected any other than a person who would be, in all respects, *a mere man*; and such is their expectation concerning the Messiah to this day.

*Πως εσται τοῦτο; How can this be?* There is great reason to suppose that the word *μοι (to me)* should follow. But whether it does or not, I think these words may be farther urged to shew the certainty of the inference deduced above. Mary makes the circumstance of her being a *virgin* a reason against the possibility of the Messiah being her offspring; and how is the difficulty removed by the angel? By declaring she shall conceive by the immediate power of God; and to render this credible to her, he refers her to the case of her own relation Elizabeth, who, though in a different manner, had conceived out of the usual course of nature. Mary, therefore, not only expresses no expectation of the Messiah's being born out of the ordinary course, but she thinks it impossible for herself to be the mother of the Messiah from the very circumstance of her being a virgin. It is to be supposed, from the context, that by the angel's words Mary was led to believe this event would immediately take place; and hence the propriety of her question.†

45. *Blessed is she that believed.* Alluding to the ready faith of Mary, and the incredulity of her husband in a similar case.

\* See this farther illustrated, *Theol. Repos.* III. pp. 313, 314, (P.) by Mr. Turner. See also Vol. XII. p. 162.

*Jebb. (P.)*



48. Μακαριοῦσι, shall pronounce me fortunate or highly favoured.\*

54, 55. *Εν τῷ* seems wanting before *μνησθῆναι*. *In the remembrance of the mercy promised (As he spake) to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.*†

## SECTION V.

*The Circumcision of John, and the Prophecy of Zacharias.*

*Luke i. 58—80.*

**LUKE i. 63.** *A writing-table.* Dr. Shaw says that the Moorish and Turkish boys, in learning to write, use no paper, but write upon thin smooth boards, slightly daubing them over with whiting, which may be wiped off, or renewed at pleasure. Such, says he, probably, (for the Jewish children did the same,) was the *πινακιδιον*, or writing-table, that was called for by Zacharias.‡

69. *A horn of salvation.* Horn is a figure denoting strength and dignity.

70. *Since the world began.* Literally, *from the age*; probably, in this place, from the commencement of the Israelitish nation.

70, 71. Enclose the 70th verse in crotchets: refer *σωτηριαν* in the beginning of the 71st verse to *κερας σωτηριας* in the 69th verse. *A salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us.*§

73. *Ποιησαι* is understood as governing *ὅρκον*: *to perform the oath.*||

74. *And saved from our enemies.* Zacharias appears not to have had any idea of the Messiah, different from that of a temporal prince like David.

78. Here seems a plain allusion to *Malachi* iv. 2, therefore *ανατολη* should rather be rendered *sun-rising* than *day-spring*.¶

The word *ανατολη* also signifies *a branch*, and therefore some suppose that it is a reference to *Isaiah* iv. 2, and other prophecies of the Messiah, which speak of him as *a branch of the house of Jesse*, or David.\*\*

\* See *Malachi* iii. 12. See also the same sentiments in the hymn of Hannah, 1 *Sam.* ii. 1—10. *Jebb.* (P.)

† Compare *Gen.* xvii. 7, 8, *Ps.* cv. 8, and the following verses. *Turner.* (P.)

‡ *Shaw's Travels*, p. 194. (P.)

§ *Turner.* (P.)

|| *Ibid.* (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* (P.)

\*\* See Vol. XII. p. 155.

## SECTION VI.

*The Birth of Jesus.\***Matthew* i. 18—25 ; *Luke* ii. 1—20.

**MATTHEW** i. 19. *Δίκαιος*, a conscientious man, as we must translate it in *Luke* xx. 20 ; supposing it possible that the allegation of Mary was true, and unwilling to bear the reproach, since most would believe her to be guilty, he took that course which a scrupulously just man would do. He would not expose her to the rigour of the law, *Deut.* xxii. 22—24, but rather declined the completion of the marriage, according to the power he had (*Deut.* xxiv. 1) of divorcing her, even if the marriage had been completed.†

23. The prophecy here referred to is found *Isaiah* vii. 14. About the interpretation of it, critics differ much.‡

*Luke* ii. 1. *Enrolled*. This was properly a *census*, or an account of persons and estates which Augustus ordered to be made through the whole Roman empire. This census was taken by Quirinius, who was afterwards governor of Syria. There was another census taken of the Jewish nation, and at the same time a tax imposed upon them, by the same Quirinius, on the death of Archilaus, to which *Luke* refers.§

7. *A manger*. Sir John Chardin supposes by a *manger*, in this place, is meant one of those holes of stone, or good cement, which are to be seen in the stables belonging to the *caravanseras* in the East, which are large enough to lay a child in ; for they have no *mangers* like ours, in the East. But he does not say what was the use of the holes he speaks of. || But *Pearce* supposes that by *manger* may be meant “ not a wooden manger, but one made of coarse cloth, like those out of which the horses of our troopers are fed, when encamped in the field ;” and that *καταλυμα* does not necessarily mean an *inn*, but a *great chamber*, such a room as that in which our Saviour ate the Passover with his disciples, and which is called by the same name.¶

I look upon the word *φάτνη* to mean a *hovel* or *stable*, it

\* See the Author's “History of Early Opinions,” B. iii. Ch. xx. *ad fin.*

† *Jebb.* (P.) See *Le Cene*, p. 722 ; *Wakefield*, p. 18.

‡ See *Wakefield*, pp. 15—21.

§ See *Lardner*, I. p. 296, and “Objections against *Luke* ii. 1, 2, considered,” *ibid.* pp. 248—329.

|| *Harmer*, I. p. 443. (P.)

¶ *Bishop Pearce's Commentary*, 1777, I. p. 309 and *Notes*.



relates to the three verbs. Literally thus: she brought forth, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid to rest, her first-born son, in a hovel, or outhouse used for cattle, or a barn; for this reason, because the inn itself was full of guests of higher station. *Wetstein* proves *φάτνη* to mean *stabulum*. This is a good reason for her being delivered in an outhouse, but none at all for laying the child in a manger. In all probability she laid him to rest either in her lap, or near where she herself lay. I suppose a manger, being something like a cradle, suggested the idea; *vers.* 12 and 16 seem to confirm this: *Ye shall find the child lying in a stable*, which was a good direction by which to find Jesus.\*

20. Methinks the evangelist's meaning will be more perspicuous, if the comma be placed after *heard*, and omitted after *seen*; i. e. *for all that they had heard of the angels, and for having found what had been told them to be true.*†

## SECTION VII.

### *The Circumcision of Jesus, and the Prophecies of Simeon and Anna.*

*Luke* ii. 21—40.

*LUKE* ii. 25. *The consolation of Israel*; i. e. the coming of the Messiah.

27. I conceive that the second *και* in this verse is superfluous, and inserted by mistake. The evangelist seems to intend to point out the exact coincidence in point of time of Simeon's entrance into the Temple and the bringing in of the child.‡

32. *Φως εις αποκαλυψιν εθνων.* Compare *Isaiah* xxv. 7: "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."§

34. *A sign.* The word *σημειον* sometimes signifies *a mark to shoot or throw at*. The meaning of the verse seems to be, that the publication of the gospel would be a blessing to those who received it, and the occasion of destruction to those who rejected it; as the apostle says, [2 *Cor.* ii. 16,] to some it was *a savour of life*, and to others of *death*. The calamities that befel the Jewish nation, as they are ascribed to their wickedness in general, so more especially to their

\* *Jebb.* (P.)

† *Turner.* (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

§ *Ibid.* (P.)



sin in killing Christ, their rejection of the gospel, and their persecution of the Christians.

37. *To all them who looked for redemption* or deliverance. It appears, from various evidence, that there was among the Jews about this time, a general and earnest expectation of the Messiah, and which continued to the destruction of Jerusalem, and afterwards. This could only have been raised by the ancient prophecies.

39. The different narratives concerning our Lord's infancy, given us by *Matthew* and *Luke*, will, I think, appear very consistent, if we only suppose that, immediately after the transactions at the Temple, Joseph and Mary went to *Nazareth*, as *Luke* says, but only to settle their affairs there, and soon after returned to *Bethlehem*, where the report of the shepherds, and the favourable impressions that report had made on the inhabitants, (see *vers.* 17, 18,) would suggest many cogent prudential motives to fix their abode. There they might have dwelt many months before the arrival of the wise men, which *Matthew* relates: for the order for the slaughter of the children which Herod gave in pursuance of the diligent inquiry which he had made of the wise men concerning the time when the star appeared, gives us ground to conclude, that a considerable time had intervened between the birth of the child, or the appearance of the star, (supposing them to coincide,) and the coming of the wise men. It is observable, also, that on Joseph's return from Egypt, his first intention seems to have been to go into Judea, most probably to Bethlehem, but through fear of *Archelaus*, and by a divine direction, he fixed at Nazareth, the place of his first abode. There he and his family were at the time of the only event of our Lord's childhood, which *Luke* has thought fit to give us; and therefore it was not to his purpose to take notice of any removal, or other place of abode.\*

40. *The grace of God*, χάρις Θεου. This may mean *an extraordinary grace*, or *gracefulness*, the term *God* being used in this manner in Hebrew for a superlative, as mountains of God, rivers of God, &c. meaning very high mountains, very large rivers, &c. On this foundation *Macknight* thinks that Jesus had a graceful or handsome person, notwithstanding what is said of him in *Isaiah* liii. 2: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him;" which he thinks will admit of another interpretation. But, on the whole, it is more pro-

bable that the *grace*, or *form of God*, means the particular guidance of heaven, as his whole conduct, and the course of events, even from his infancy, indicated.\*

The words *in spirit* are not in all the MSS., and are better omitted.

## SECTION VIII.

*The Homage of the Magians, the Journey to Egypt, the Murder of the Children at Bethlehem, and the Return of Jesus to Nazareth.*

*Matt. ii. 1—23.*

**MATTHEW** ii. 1, 2. The *Magians* were persons who lived in colleges, studying astronomy, and other parts of natural knowledge, and they are said to have worshipped one God, without the use of images. Daniel accepted the office of master of the Magians, and many others of them were Jews. *Pearce*, therefore, thinks that, probably these Magians were Jews too. And, indeed, it is not probable that a revelation of the birth of the Messiah would be made so early as this to any Heathens. On the supposition that they were not Jews, but Arabians, Mr. *Turner* conjectures that they understood this strange light to denote the birth of a great prince in the land of Judea, from their being acquainted with the prediction of their countryman Balaam, *Numb. xxiv. 17.*

What is here called *a star*, was probably a kind of meteor, which is often called *ασηρ*, or star, by Greek writers.†

I think it had been better rendered, *Now after Jesus was born*—. This would have admitted the supposition of a considerable interval between the birth of Jesus and the coming of the wise men, which appears to me the truth; whereas our translation, *when Jesus was born*, imports that they came at the time, or soon after the birth.‡

11. In the East no persons of rank are approached without a present; and the gifts of these Magians were such as were proper to be presented to a royal child.§

15. *Out of Egypt have I called my son.* The prophecy referred to by the evangelist is *Hosea xi. 1*, where the words here quoted, occur. The application of the passage to Christ does not seem to be strictly proper; since it cannot be pre-

\* *Jebb. (P.)*

† See *Theol. Repos. IV. pp. 485—500; Wakefield, pp. 22—25.*

‡ *Turner. (P.)*

§ See *Harmer, II. p. 23. (P.) Wakefield, pp. 27, 28.*



tended that, in the original, it refers to any thing more than the children of Israel who had been in Egypt.\*

18. The passage in *Jeremiah* here referred to is *Chap.* xxxi. 15: "In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not." But it does not appear to refer to the times of Christ; for the prophet is only speaking of the condition of Rama in his own time, when the inhabitants of that place were carried into captivity, and he was prophesying of their return.†

20. *They are dead that sought the young child's life.* These were probably *Herod* and *Antipater*.‡

23. *He shall be called a Nazarene.* This does not refer to any particular passage in any of the prophets, but to the general idea that is given of the Messiah in all the prophets, who speak of him as a man who should be *hated, reviled, persecuted and afflicted*, and the Hebrew word from which Nazareth is derived signifies this, as well as to be *separated*, or sequestered from other men; and the town of Nazareth itself was, both in name and in reality, a despised place.§ Some have thought that the evangelist referred to the Messiah being called נצר a branch; but the word *Nazarene* is not derived from this, but from נזיר, as mentioned above.

\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 29—31.

† See Vol. XII. p. 237; "Dr. Nicholls's *Conference with a Theist*," (II. Part 3,) in *Wakefield*, p. 33.

‡ See *Mann*, pp. 74, 75. (P.) "The words of this verse are chiefly adopted from the LXX's version of *Exod.* iv. 19, where a circumstance is related very much resembling this." *Wakefield*, p. 33.

§ See Dr. Hunt's Sermon on this subject. (P.) Mr. Upton supposes the evangelist to have finished at *Nazareth*. He adds, "Then comes a cabalistical annotator, and in imitation of the rest of the prophecies, adds, in a marginal note, the following words, *επως*, &c. But where is it said that the Messiah should be called a Nazarene? Must not a poor pun, or play upon a word be forced on us, even to give a distant hint of such an appellation, (*Isa.* xi. 1); a quibble, in this place, unworthy the gravity of an evangelist? And to wiredraw what is said of Sampson (*Judg.* xiii. 5) into a prediction of the Messiah's being born at Nazareth, is the last effort of commentators driven to their utmost shifts.—But it is objected that we must take all the Scripture together just as we find it. What, writers for hire, and ignorant scribes to be placed in equal regard and authority with the evangelists! Weak and wicked as this objection is, yet I have heard it from foolish friends as well as evil-minded enemies. These marginal notes carry with them no air of fraud or ill-design; they are such as most critics scribble in their books, and which printing generally hinders from being ingrafted into the body of the original work." See "Critical Observations on Shakspeare, by John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester," 1746, pp. 267—269. This charge on an *annotator* has been supposed "altogether gratuitous, with the immediate view of screening the evangelist from the charge of *inconsequent* argumentation—a compendious mode of criticism, certainly well calculated to remove all difficulties at once, but not to be admitted without the most plausible pretensions: which do not urge in the present instance with more force than in many others." See *Wakefield*, pp. 35—37; *Com. and Ess.* II. p. 456.



## SECTION IX.

*Jesus goes to Jerusalem at twelve years of age.*

*Luke ii. 41—52.*

42. AT twelve years of age the Jews reckoned their children capable of religion, and made them take upon them the yoke of the law.\*

46. The teachers of the law used to expound it to the people in the apartments of the Temple: there young men used to inquire of them, and be examined by them concerning it. We are not, therefore, to suppose that Jesus, at the early age of twelve years, assumed the character of an instructor; but that he attended to the instructions of those who were skilled in the law, and for his information asked pertinent questions.

## SECTION X.

*The Preaching of John and the Baptism of Jesus.*

*Matt. iii. 1—17; Mark i. 1—11; Luke iii. 1—18, 21, 22.*

*MATT. iii. 2. The kingdom of heaven* was a phrase borrowed from *Daniel ii. 44; vii. 13, 14.*†

4. There was nothing of excessive rigour, but only of great simplicity in John the Baptist's mode of living. Locusts‡ are very commonly eaten in the East; honey is rather a delicacy, but such as that country afforded in great plenty, and a clothing of hair is to this day common in the same country. Camels' hair is very useful for this purpose.§

9. The Jews lay a most unreasonable stress on their being the children of Abraham. “*Munster* quotes a passage from

\* Benson's *Life of Christ*, p. 1. (P.)

† “The Jews would understand by it a kingdom, durable as the days of Heaven: for this was the *Hebrew* expression to denote duration and stability. See *Deut. xi. 21; Ps. lxxxix. 30.* The other evangelists have adopted another phrase, better suited to their purpose; *The kingdom of God.* The *Christian* dispensation is not called *the kingdom of Heaven* throughout the New Testament, this gospel excepted.” *Wakefield*, p. 40.

‡ “Some have supposed the word to mean *herbs*, or the tops of shrubs. *Pearce* refers, with a view to this sense, to *Jos. Vit. Sect. ii.*, and *2 Macc. v. 27*; but real locusts are probably intended. Locusts were animals permitted to the Jews, *Lev. xi. 22*, and were eaten by the poorer sort of Greeks.” *Ibid.* p. 41. See *Pearce*, I. p. 17.

§ See *Harmer*, I. p. 298; II. p. 407. (P.)

the *Talmud*, in which it is said ‘ that Abraham sits next the gates of hell, and doth not permit any wicked *Israelite* to go down into it.’ ”\*

12. *Winnowing shovel*. This was the instrument generally used in Judea to throw up the corn against the wind, which would blow away the chaff. The *fan* is an instrument that a man could not well take in his hand, at least to make use of it. †.

As winnowing was done in the open air by the wind, it was usual to set fire to the chaff, lest, on a sudden change of the wind, it should be blown back into the wheat.

14. This verse evidently implies some knowledge of Jesus, in some view, at the time when it was addressed to him. But how are we to reconcile it with what *the Baptist* says, *John* i. 33, “ I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit”? In order to reconcile these seemingly contradictory accounts, some have supposed that John had not even any personal knowledge of Jesus, but only inferred his superiority to himself, from perceiving a dignity, wisdom and piety in his manner and conversation, which corresponded to his own idea of what the person he was sent to announce must be; he suspected that Jesus might prove the person, and declined baptizing him on this account, though he knew him not till he saw the divine testimonial which had been foretold to him. But it is again supposed, and with great probability, that John, who was the cousin of Jesus, must have been acquainted with him before his baptism, and must have known his extraordinary character for wisdom and piety, and that on this account he said, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* Mine is a baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, and therefore a rite which it would be better for me to submit to from thee, than administer to thee. But though he acknowledges Jesus to be his superior in these views, either from his former acquaintance with his character, or the discovery he made of it in the course of some previous conversation at the time, which is not re-

\* Doddridge, Sect. xvi. (P.)

† “ Our common version corresponds best to the mention of this implement in *Homer* (*Il.* N. 588), and in *Theocritus* (*Id.* vii. 156). The evangelist may mean as large an instrument as that spoken of in these poets: for the words *in the hand* probably mean only to have in readiness for use.” Wakefield, p. 47. On *Matt.* iii. 7—12, see *Theol. Repos.* I. pp. 396—400.



corded, he might still with truth affirm, *I knew him not*, i. e. to be the same who should baptize with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, he could not be entirely convinced of this till the promised sign appeared.\*

But perhaps it is more probable to suppose that *Matthew*, who did not attend upon Jesus till some time after the commencement of his public ministry, and of whose attendance upon the Baptist we have no account, had been misinformed with respect to this circumstance; and this will not at all affect the proper evidence of Christianity, since such different conceptions and different representations of circumstances are to be found in the most credible historians.

15. According to this account, Jesus acquiesced in the acknowledgment of John that he was his superior, which he hardly would have done if he had not known himself to be so, and the very person whom he had announced as such. On this account, it is the more probable that Matthew did suppose that the Baptist knew that Jesus was the person whom he was sent to announce, before he baptized him. *To fulfil all righteousness*, must mean to comply with all the appointments of God. Our Lord virtually acknowledges that John's baptism was founded upon divine authority, and therefore however little propriety there might appear to be in the coming of him who was *holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners*, along with a guilty multitude to a *baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins*, yet here was an institution designed for general use, without particular exceptions, which did not at all interfere with any moral obligation, and with which, therefore, he thought himself bound to comply. So different were our Lord's sentiments and conduct from theirs who neglect the positive institutions of religion.

17. This most astonishing miracle was perhaps witnessed by great numbers, and was something similar to that from Mount Sinai, though not of so long continuance, nor preceded by any extraordinary appearance, as thunder and lightning. *Luke* [iii. 21] introduces his account of it with saying that *when all the people were baptized*, i. e. when people of all ranks or descriptions were baptized, it came to pass also that *Jesus, being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened*. The mention of the multitude in connexion with Jesus upon this occasion, makes it highly probable that there were many witnesses to it; and some have thought

\* See *Theol. Repos.* V. pp. 249, 250.



our Lord alluded to this appearance, as seen by the multitude, when, upon recounting the different attestations of his divine mission, in a discourse in the Temple, he said, *John* v. 37, "Have ye not heard his voice, and seen his shape?" for so the original may be translated. The whole transaction must have taken up some time. In the words of Matthew, the heavens were opened unto him, and *he*, i. e. John, *saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove*. Luke says, *in a bodily appearance as a dove*, by which some understand not the *figure*, but the *motion* of a dove, i. e. with an easy, gentle descent, and lighting upon him.\* The evangelist proceeds, *And lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. It is imagined that Jesus being thus called the *beloved Son of God*, upon this wonderful occasion, might lead him to call himself *the Son of God*, and *the Son*, by way of eminence, and to call God his Father, without expressly announcing himself as the Messiah; for this he did upon all occasions, and when it is evident that he had not informed even the apostles either that he was the Messiah, or that John the Baptist was *Elias*, which would have amounted to the same thing.

Whether this descent of the Spirit was manifested by its affecting Jesus in any particular manner, as a similar appearance did the apostles on the day of Pentecost, we are not informed.

*Mark* i. 3. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c.* This is an allusion to the end of the thirty-ninth, and beginning of the fortieth chapters of *Isaiah*.

*Luke* iii. 1. *The fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar* immediately preceded that in which the two *Gemini* were consuls, and in that year, according to the testimony of all antiquity, Jesus was crucified; so that his ministry could not have lasted much more than a year, and John's not many months, and it does not contain more events than might easily fall within that space of time. The preaching of the gospel was only begun by our Lord, and was confined to Judea; and for the rest, the apostles and their successors were abundantly sufficient.

This *Herod* and *Philip* were two brothers, sons of Herod the Great, and according to *Josephus*,† *Philip* was a man of an excellent character. His wife leaving him, was received and married by Herod, who was very profligate. *Lysanias*

\* See Vol. VIII. p. 15; Le Clerc's *Nov. Test.* 1703, p. 10; Wakefield, pp. 48, 49.

† *Antiq. B.* xviii. Ch. iv. Sect. vi.

was probably descended from another person of the same name, whom Anthony the Roman general had made governor of the same country some time before.

2. *Annas and Caiaphas* are here both called *high-priests*; but it is probable that the latter only held the office, while the former, who had been high-priest before, retained the title, especially as being father-in-law to Caiaphas, and a person of great consideration in other respects. He seems from the account of *Josephus*,\* to have had the chief influence in affairs both before and after the death of Jesus.

3. John was opening a way for a new dispensation of religion, and he was, no doubt, authorized to do it by the institution of a new rite. The Jews, indeed, admitted their proselytes by baptism, though in the law of Moses circumcision only is expressly mentioned, and the purifications of the Jewish ritual bore a considerable resemblance to it.

The *Essenes*, Josephus says, received members into their society by baptism.†

It appears that there was something emblematical in this rite, from the language of Ananias to Paul, *Acts* xxii. 16, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins;" and also from that of *Peter* (1 *Ep.* iii. 21), "Baptism doth now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God."

The baptism of John seems to have had no reference to Christianity, but was only preceded by a profession of repentance on the part of the person baptized, and an assurance that, in this case, all sins would be forgiven. It is therefore called *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin*. The same rite is called *Christian baptism* after the promulgation of the gospel, as it was used by Christ and his apostles, in consequence of a profession of faith in Jesus, as well as a declaration of repentance.

5, 6. *Every valley shall be filled, &c.* These verses are a quotation from the beginning of the fortieth chapter of *Isaiah*, and allude to the manner in which the Eastern princes travelled, with a large body of pioneers before them to clear their way. The application of them to our Lord and his forerunner is sufficiently obvious. It was the business of *John*, by calling the people to repentance, to remove the obstacles which would prevent the reception of Jesus as the true Messiah. The prophet seems to have had in view the future state of the Jewish nation, when they shall be

\* *Antiq. B.* xviii. Ch. ii. Sect. ii. Ch. iv. Sect. iii.

† *Spencer*, p. 1180. (P.)



finally settled in their own country, under a prince of the house of David, but the language is properly employed to describe the introduction of so joyful an event as the promulgation of the gospel. *Matthew* says that John began his ministry with saying, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. This phrase is taken from the prophecy of *Daniel*, in which there are several instances of similar expressions. The Jews would therefore easily apply this, as they expected that the Messiah would establish an everlasting kingdom, to be called *the kingdom of heaven*, agreeably to this prophecy.

7. If we compare this verse with the seventh in the third of *Matthew*, we shall find that John only addressed this language to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who formed a part of the attendant multitude; and we shall repeatedly see in the course of the gospel history, from our Saviour's own language, that John's address was not ill-suited to their character. The Pharisees carried their superstition to the utmost excess, multiplying ceremonies far beyond the injunctions of the law, and what is much worse, (indeed, what principally constituted their guilt,) at once substituting these external observances in the room of moral duties, and making them a cloak for great moral depravity, at the same time priding themselves upon their peculiar holiness; while the Sadducees, on the other hand, were unbelievers in a future state, and are said to have been characterized by great profligacy of manners. Hence John appears to speak the language of surprise, as well as reproach, "Who hath warned you to fly from the wrath to come?" By the *wrath to come* he probably alludes to the conclusion of the prophecy of *Malachi*, who, after speaking of an approaching day, that shall utterly "consume the proud and evil-doers," adds, in the name of God, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

8. There is considerable harshness in the figure of speech used by the preacher in this place, in which men are compared to *stones*, dug out of a rock, or quarry, it being more usual to compare them to the *branches* or *leaves of trees*, the ancestor being considered as the root or stock of the tree. But the same figure is used by the prophet *Isaiah*, and to this John might allude; and the Jews having hardly any other books than their own Scriptures, and all being able to read them, they were most minutely acquainted with them, and were perpetually quoting or alluding to them. *Isaiah*



says, *Chap. li. 2*, "Look ye to the rock from which ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which ye were digged. Look unto Abraham your father." The Jews, then, boasting of their extraction from this source, the prophet informs them, that any other quarry, or *stones*, would serve the purpose of God's providence as well as that. Literally, indeed, no other could become the proper descendants of Abraham than his real posterity; but God would take any other, even such as they held in the greatest contempt, and bring them into the same spiritual relation to himself, so as to be heirs of equal blessings.

9. The preaching of John corresponded exactly with his instructions, which were to preach *the baptism of repentance*; all the persons who applied to him being cautioned against those vices to which their situations and circumstances rendered them peculiarly prone; and at the ninth verse there is a strong intimation of some great approaching judgment which would fall on the impenitent. *And now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, &c.* In this there was, no doubt, an allusion to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities which befel the Jewish nation, from which the Christians were exempted.

14. Not Roman, but Jewish *soldiers*.

15, 16. It was the object of John's mission *to prepare the way of the Lord*, and he pursued it, as we have already seen, by his baptism of repentance for remission of sins, to which he exhorted the people, by declaring that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But he seems not to have dwelt upon any particulars descriptive of the great prophet whose approach he announced, till the suspicions or inquiries of the people, who were eagerly expecting the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, as the accomplishment of their prophecies, afforded him an opportunity of doing it with particular advantage. The Jews were prepared to receive the Messiah in the character of a prophet, as well as that of a king. This was evidently the idea of the woman of Samaria; and as the Jews appear to have regarded John as a true prophet, they might naturally (as we are told in the 15th verse)  *muse in their hearts*  whether he was the Christ or not. But as soon as John perceived their suspicions, he took effectual care to remove them, by declaring that another prophet, far superior to himself, so far superior that he was not worthy to loose his shoes, would soon make his appearance; and as they expected none greater than the Messiah, they must conclude that he (John) could not be that per-

sonage. By *baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire*, John has been generally thought to refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, under the appearance of cloven tongues, or flames of fire; though it is doubted by some who adopt this interpretation, whether John understood his prophecy or not. But there is another interpretation which I shall mention in connexion with the subsequent verse, from which it derives its probability.

17. John had before denounced the judgments of God against the impenitent in general, and now asserts that the person by whom this justice would be administered, would be he whose forerunner he was; who, like as the husbandman separates the chaff from the wheat, preserves the grain and destroys the useless husk, would distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, and assign them their portion according to their respective characters. By *unquenchable fire* is meant fire that will not be put out, but continue to burn till it has consumed the chaff.\* Virtue will receive the recompence of reward, but vice will be finally destroyed. Here then we may have the idea of baptism both with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Baptism properly means *plunging*, or total immersion in water, but is applied figuratively to other things, and signifies doing any thing *totally* or *completely*; and the application is generally made to a state of suffering rather than enjoyment, though it may be made to either. Thus an historian, speaking of a general who came with an army and made great havoc in a city, says *he baptized the city*. To *baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire*, may signify then, he shall communicate the Holy Spirit in profusion, which may include the attestations from above to his divine mission, with the effects which the acknowledgments of it would produce; but unto obstinate and vicious unbelievers he will prove the minister of the divine judgments. He will baptize them *with unquenchable fire*, alluding most probably to the complete overthrow of the Jewish nation, to which he had before referred under the appellation of *the wrath to come*.

18. The evangelist no where intimates that he taught any other doctrine: by the expression in this verse we are therefore to understand nothing more than that he dwelt upon and illustrated those which he just considered.

\* "As for instance; in *Lev. vi. 13*, we read, 'The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall *never* go out.' This is a much stronger expression than if it had been said, *It shall not be quenched*; for it is said, '*It shall never go out*;' but, surely, it must be used with some limitation, for we know that it hath ceased ages ago." Winchester's *Universal Restoration*, republished by Mr. Vidler, 1799, p. 51.



## SECTION XI.

*The Temptation of Jesus.*

*Matt.* iv. 1—11 ; *Mark* i. 12, 13 ; *Luke* iv. 1—13.

CONSIDERING the very important mission of our Saviour, and what I must take for granted in this place, that he was a man like any one of us, and who could therefore have no preparation for it but what he received from God at one period of his life or other, there must have been a time in which he was informed concerning his peculiar character as the *Messiah*, and been instructed in all the particulars relating to it. The character he sustained being so truly great and illustrious, the probability is that his mind was prepared for it gradually, and that he had intimations directly or indirectly conveyed to him pretty early in life, that he had some extraordinary part to act in it. That this was supposed to be the case, we may collect from what *Luke* relates of his journey to Jerusalem when twelve years old, at which time he called the Temple *his father's house*, as well as from what *Matthew* relates of *John the Baptist* considering him as his superior, and of Jesus admitting that he was so. But I cannot say that I am disposed to lay much stress upon either of these circumstances. The extraordinary part that Jesus acted afterwards would naturally prepare the minds of his followers to receive such accounts as these on insufficient evidence.

Independent of any accounts of this kind, it is probable in itself that some intimation would be given to Jesus of his having more important business in the world than that of other men ; because had a plain man, in the lower ranks of life, though of a virtuous conduct and a pious disposition, been informed all at once that he was the *Messiah*, even such a one as the Jews expected in that character, and much more such a one as Jesus was to be, (which was infinitely greater,) his mind would have been overwhelmed with it. We may conjecture, therefore, that he was at least divinely directed to go to the baptism of *John*, and prepared to expect something extraordinary on that occasion, whether he was particularly informed concerning the actual appearance or not. It is probable, however, that Jesus was not fully instructed in the particulars of his character and mission, till after the visible descent of the Spirit



of God upon him at his baptism, and we are naturally led to suppose that this was the business of the forty days which preceded his temptation, which forty days he passed in the Wilderness no doubt in absolute solitude; and, as we are informed, without eating or drinking. This so much resembles the case of Moses, who was on Mount Sinai the same number of days, fasting also, and in communion with God, that we are naturally led to suppose that these forty days in the life of Jesus were passed in a similar manner; and this might be sufficient to prepare his mind for all that he had to do and suffer, especially as he was not called to immediate action. It may be further conjectured, (and in this case we are unavoidably left very much to our conjectures,) that Jesus, passing these forty days in a state of peculiar communion with God, (in all which time he was without food, and probably also without sleep,) would imagine himself to be in what is commonly called *heaven*, where God is supposed to reside; as Paul imagined [2 Cor. xii. 2] that he was caught up into the third heaven during his vision or trance. On this easy hypothesis we may suppose that it was to this being in heaven, and with God, that Jesus might allude, when he said that he had *come down from heaven*, [John iii. 13; vi. 38,] and was to *ascend up to where he had been before*, [John vi. 62,] though these phrases do not necessarily imply any thing more than his having received a mission from God; and they might have been applied to the case of any other prophets, who are indeed also said to have been *sent of God*, and even to *come from God*, as if they had been in heaven where God is supposed to be.

*Matt. iv. 1.* By the *spirit* we are, no doubt, to understand the spirit of God, and the phrases, *led by the spirit*, [Gal. v. 18,] and being *in the spirit*, [Rev. i. 10,] are supposed to be used in the Scriptures to express what is called a *vision*, in which the natural impression of visible objects is prevented, and the mind becomes subject to other impressions from the immediate agency of God. It has therefore been supposed, with great probability, that this temptation was something that passed in a vision, succeeding that in which he had been instructed in the particulars concerning his mission. It consisted of such scenes, as when our Lord reflected upon them, would prepare him for the difficulties he would meet with in the course of his ministry, and some of which, at least, evidently arose out of the particular nature of his character and office. That the whole of this

temptation could not possibly be a real transaction, is evident from the nature of some of the particulars, a circumstance which itself makes it probable that the whole is to be understood with a similar latitude of interpretation; for we cannot suppose that one part of the same relation is true in a literal, and the other only in a figurative sense.

The agent in this temptation is called *the Devil*, the same that in the Old Testament is called *Satan*, and this is probably not a real, but an allegorical personage, the *principle*, or cause of *evil* in general, natural or moral.\* The Heathens, indeed, supposed that there was a real being, a great and malignant spirit, who was the author of all the evil in the world; because they could not account for it on any other principle: but this is by no means the doctrine of the Scriptures, in which good and evil are equally ascribed to the same good Being, to whose excellent purposes evil is as subservient as good. Even temptations to sin, which are commonly ascribed to the suggestions of this evil spirit, are by the apostle *James* most expressly ascribed to a man's self, when he says, (*Chap. i. 14.*) "Every man is tempted when he is drawn aside by his own lusts, and enticed." Besides, in the language of Scripture, any thing that is evil is called *Satan*, or the *Devil*, and is not always said to come from him. Thus, when *Peter* suggested to our Saviour an improper thought, he said, (*Matt. xvi. 23.*) "Get thee behind me, Satan.—Thou (i. e. thou, Peter) savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." And when he spoke of the traitorous designs of *Judas*, he said, (*John vi. 70.*) "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is the devil?" as the phrase may be most naturally rendered. It is probable, therefore, that the sacred writers themselves (though there is no inconvenience in supposing that they had adopted the opinion of their neighbours concerning a great and malignant evil being, as they did the doctrine of *Demons*) use the term *Satan*, or *Devil*, as expressive of the principle of evil in general, and that they had no idea of the real existence of such a being as the Devil is supposed to be. Nothing, indeed, can be more improbable than the existence of such a being as the Devil, who, in the vulgar opinion, is a kind of rival of the Supreme Being, present in every place at the same time, or in the quickest possible succession, knowing every thing, even the thoughts of men's hearts, (which, if any thing, is surely the prerogative of God only,) and almost omnipotent.

\* See Vol. II. pp. 374, 375; Vol. XII. pp. 33, 34.



For, in the Scriptures there is no mention made of more than *one* Devil, and such also is the common opinion, though it is imagined that he has inferior evil spirits acting under him. If this appearance passed in vision, there might be the appearance of some person in the character of the tempter. So we read in 2 *Chron.* xviii. 20, 21, that the prophet *Micaiah*, in a vision, saw a *lying spirit* in the presence of God; and in the scenical representation of the book of *Job*, *Satan* is described as standing along with the angels in conversation with God.

As many persons will, after all, think it unnatural to suppose that speech and action should be ascribed to a mere allegorical person, let them consider in what manner the *Comforter*, or Spirit of God, is described by our Saviour; for in his representation, words and actions are ascribed to him, as if he had been a real person, distinct from God, whose spirit he is (*John* xiv. 26): "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (*Chap.* xvi. 13, 14): "Howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak. And he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Notwithstanding this strongly figurative language, it is evident from the apostle Paul, (1 *Cor.* ii. 11,) that *the spirit of God* is no more a being distinct from God, than *the spirit of man* is a being distinct from the man.

2. We must observe, that the scene which is called *the temptation* followed the interval of forty days and forty nights, as this verse expressly informs us; though, from the less particular accounts of *Mark* and *Luke*, we might have concluded that the whole forty days and nights had been taken up with the temptation. Indeed it is the circumstance of the temptation's being after this length of time, which greatly adds to the probability of this temptation having been in a vision.

3. This temptation is addressed to the pressing necessities of hunger, after a fast of so long a time, and to the gratification of his vanity, in proving himself to be the Son of God, by working a miracle for his relief. This is a temptation to which he must often have been exposed in the course of his ministry, when he had no other means of sup-



plying the wants of nature ; and no doubt it was to prepare him for withstanding them, that he was now presented with this. We find, in fact, that to whatever straits our Lord was reduced, whether he was hungry, thirsty, or weary, he never attempted to work a miracle for his relief, but submitted to the infirmities of our nature, and was supported through them. It was one object of Christ's mission to set us an example of unshaken submission to the Divine will in every circumstance ; but he could not have exhibited this pattern if, instead of bearing his trials, he had exerted his miraculous power to remove them.

4. This is a quotation from *Deut.* viii. 3, and implies that whatever God is pleased to appoint, he will either afford a means of subsistence, or make some other adequate provision for our support.\* Jesus always replies to the tempter in the words of Scripture, which the Jews applied on all occasions, and often without much regard to the original meaning of the passage.

6, 7. Jesus had been declared to be *the Son of God*, at his baptism, and to this, no doubt, there is an allusion here ; but it does not necessarily follow that it implied his being the Messiah. It was sufficient for the purpose of the tempter that it implied a state of high favour with God. From the nature of this temptation, it is evident that it could not be a real transaction ; for it cannot be supposed that Jesus was carried through the air at the pleasure of such a being, and placed upon a pinnacle of the Temple, probably in the view of many thousands of people.† Our Saviour is here addressed by a misapplication of a text of Scripture (*Psalms* xci. 11). But what was promised under particular circumstances, could never be designed to extend to all circumstances. This is the principle of our Lord's answer. We are never to make trial how far the Divine goodness will extend, by wantonly exposing ourselves to unnecessary difficulties, which is in fact insulting it. Or by *tempting God* may mean in this place, distrusting God, which is the meaning of the passage as it stands in *Deut.* vi. 16, which our Lord has quoted upon this occasion. "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Why should I ask any further proof of my being the Son of God, than has

\* "Il faut traduire que l'homme ne vit pas seulement de pain, mais de tout ce que Dieu ordonne, ou de toute chose qu'il ordonne pour le nourrir." *Le Cene*, p. 726. See *Essay*, 1727, pp. 195, 196.

† See Vol. II. p. 374, *Note*.

been already given by a voice from heaven, for that purpose? This interpretation, however, may be reduced to the general principle above suggested.

8—10. This scene must necessarily have passed in vision, and not in reality; for we must know that there neither is, nor could be, any mountain from which all the kingdoms of the earth, and still less the glory of them, i. e. their riches, power and splendour, could be seen.\* Such a supposition would imply more absurdities than one. Besides, *Luke* adds it was all done *in a moment of time*. The moral lesson of this temptation was, that the kingdom of Christ was not to be of this world, and that he was by no means to affect that power which the Jews ascribed to their *Messiah*, or to appear in the pomp of earthly princes.

It is possible that nothing more may be meant by the whole of this account, than that certain evil suggestions occurred to our Lord's own mind upon his being declared to be the Son of God, and after having received divine communications to qualify him for his office; and if he were a man, it is impossible but such thoughts as these must have occurred to his mind, though from a principle of piety he rejected them. Indeed, the whole of this scene proves that Jesus was properly a man, exposed to the same temptations with other men, and liable to be influenced by them; and that he was neither God nor any superior being, the maker of the world and all things under God. For what would the offer of the kingdoms of this world have been to such a being as this?

11. i. e. They either supplied him with food, or afforded him that relief which he must have wanted, notwithstanding he was miraculously supported through the preceding fast of forty days.

As this temptation seems to have been intended to instruct Jesus with respect to the use that he was to make of his miraculous powers, some have supposed that those

\* "Cet endroit a fait soupçonner à quelques interprètes, que cette tentation ne se fût passée en vision, ou en songe; parce qu'il n'y a point de montagne d'où l'on puisse voir *tous les royaumes du monde et leur gloire*, c'est-à-dire, leur éclat et leurs richesses.—La vue humaine ne s'étend qu'à quelques lieues, et quand elle s'étendrait plus loin, on ne pourroit néanmoins pas voir tout cela." *Le Clerc* on *ver.* 8.

For the notion of Hugh Broughton, adopted by *Milton*, (B. iv. l. 40—42,) see the Note to Bishop Newton's *Paradise Regained*, Ed. 3, 1760, pp 150, 151. Bishop Pearce thinks the *temptation* "was real, and that Jesus alluded to this in the petition *deliver us from evil (or the evil one)*." He adds that "by the *kingdoms of the world*, perhaps no more is meant than the *Jewish world*, the several countries of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, &c., and of all these Moses is said to have had a sight from Mount Nebo, in *Deut.* xxxiv. 1—4." *Commentary*, l. pp. 21—23.



powers were at his command, as much as the power of speaking or walking are at the command of ordinary men. And, indeed, in general, Jesus did work miracles with less preparation, and in a more authoritative manner, than any other prophet; as when he said to the leper, [*Matt. viii. 3,*] *I will, be thou clean.* But other facts seem to shew that mental prayer preceded all his miracles, as well as before he raised Lazarus from the dead, which he did in the same authoritative and seemingly independent manner, saying, *Lazarus, come forth;* for in his address to his Father on this occasion, he said, *I know that thou hearest me always* [*John xi. 42, 43*]. Also, when he was betrayed he said he could have prayed to his Father, and he would have sent legions of angels to rescue him from his enemies. What occasion would there have been for this prayer, if the angels had been his proper servants? Also, if it had been possible, which it was not, that Jesus should have been disposed to work an improper miracle, we cannot think that it would have taken place. And if it had been possible at all, it might have been so, though he had been the highest of created beings; for they are all necessarily imperfect. But the proper object of this temptation, and instruction from above, might be to discipline his mind, that he might thoroughly understand his situation; and then no improper wish of this kind would ever enter his mind.\*

## SECTION XII.

### *The Testimony of John concerning Jesus.*

#### *John i. 19—34.*

JOHN i. 19. The appearance of so extraordinary a person as *John the Baptist*, declaring that *he came from God*, which had not been pretended to for four hundred years before, and in a nation which, in former ages, had been favoured with many prophets, and professed a great veneration for them, could not but excite the greatest attention, especially as they were now expecting one greater than all their preceding prophets. Besides the inquiries which were made, no doubt in a more private way, we are not surprised at a more solemn deputation of the principal persons of the nation, probably

\* See on this Section, *Farmer's "Inquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation," passim*; and *Wakefield*, pp. 50—59.

the *Sanhedrim*, or chief court of judicature, in the country, to procure information of his proper character and pretensions, of which we have an account in this chapter.

As it does not appear that John opened his commission with any application to the chief rulers, but began by addressing the common people, it seems the former took umbrage at him; and had they not feared the multitude, who venerated him, they would have declared against him. We may gather John's sentiments of them from *Matt. iii. 7*: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" And our Saviour's sentiments were similar. The rulers of the nation having received no application from *John*, now that his general popularity began to give them some alarm, sent a formal deputation to him when he was in the country beyond Jordan, probably with an insidious design, such as frequently appeared in their conduct to our Saviour afterwards. Their professed object, however, was to hear from himself, whether he was either the *Messiah*, or some one sent to announce his coming. But they, no doubt, expected the Messiah would declare himself to *them*, in the first instance, as being of most consequence in the country.

21. As all the Jews expected that *Elias* was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and to anoint him, which had been the custom of prophets in respect to kings in former times, this solemn declaration of John, that he was not *Elias*, not only proves that he did not know himself to be that person, but that he did not know that Jesus was the Messiah. This observation is of great importance to our understanding the Gospel History.\*

So different was Jesus from what the Jews expected of their Messiah, that it was of consequence he should not be generally known in that character. Accordingly our Saviour acknowledged it with great caution, and only in private to his apostles, a considerable time after the commencement of his public ministry, which would have been unnecessary if John had informed all the country that he was commissioned by God to announce him to all the people in that character. After such an authentic declaration, it would have been strange to affect any secrecy.

\* It was first suggested by Mr. Palmer in the *Theol. Repos. (P.)* See the papers signed *Christophilos* in the *Theol. Repos.* IV. and V., and Dr. Priestley's Account of the Author, VI. pp. 217—224.



So little had Jesus said upon the subject, notwithstanding his teaching in the Temple, and other places, that at his trial, the high-priest thought it proper to have the declaration from his own mouth, in open court, which would have been unnecessary if they had been able to procure sufficient proof of the same thing from others. John, therefore, though he had it in commission from God to announce Jesus as a prophet greatly superior to himself, appears not to have known precisely what his character was, and we see he was cautious not to exceed his commission.

23. If we consult the original passage in *Isaiah*, [xl. 3,] we shall see this only relates to that glorious state of things which is to take place on the re-establishment of the Jews in their country.\* But such expressions might be naturally applied to the case of *John the Baptist*, or any person whose business it was to introduce a happy change of things, which was certainly done by the preaching of the gospel.

25. There is little doubt that proselytes were admitted into the Jewish religion by baptism.† Hence it would be considered as an introduction into the profession of a new religion, and accordingly they inquire why John, who declared he was neither *Elias*, the *Christ*, nor *the prophet*, baptized. They conceived that this rite would be suitable to the Messiah, his forerunner, or the other expected prophet; because though the Messiah was not in their ideas to abrogate their religion, he was to effect a wonderful revolution both in a civil and a religious view. How they came to submit so generally to the baptism of John, as none of the prophets used such a ceremony, and they could not account for it in him, does not easily appear. Perhaps it was a compliance occasioned by their respect for his character, and their general reception of him as a prophet.

26. John seems to say that his baptism was not that of *proselytism*, but only of *repentance*, which might tend to obviate their cavils, as if he had preached a new religion. That the Jews at this time baptized, as well as circumcised, their proselytes, cannot, I think, be doubted.

29. If John did not know that Jesus was the Messiah, he could not refer to his death, when he said, *Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.*‡ But

\* See Vol XII. p. 194.

† See this question discussed in Wall's *Introduction* and Gale's *Reflections*, Let. ix.

‡ "Taking sin out of the world." *Com. and Ess.* II. p. 305. "Alluding to *Isaiah* liii. 7. Probably he meant this of the Jewish world only. See *Matt.* i. 21; *Luke* ii. 11." *Pearce*, I. p. 465. See *supra*, p. 37.

the innocence of our Lord's character, and the effect of his preaching, which John certainly expected would produce a great reformation in the world, sufficiently justifies the comparison.

30. It is evident not only that John had no idea of Jesus being any other than a mere man, but that he was so termed by the Divine Being, from whom he received his commission; for John appears to have been remarkably exact in keeping to the very words of it, in other particulars, and therefore, no doubt, in this. He had been informed that his mission had been subservient to that of a great prophet, and also that this prophet was *a man*. Had he therefore been any thing more than a man, John would have been led into an error by God himself, and his high authority would be the means of leading others into errors also. Since, therefore, John says that he who was to come after him, was to be a man, we must take it for granted that he was so, and in himself considered nothing more; *a man*, as Peter calls him, in *Acts* ii. 22, *approved of God*.

31. That is, *I knew him not* to be the person I was sent to announce, before I saw the appointed sign.

33. John keeps strictly to the terms of his commission. He says not that Jesus was the Messiah, but only a greater prophet, to whose mission his own was introductory, and who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

34. The term *Son of God*, is not necessarily equivalent to the *Messiah*, though properly applied to him by way of eminence, as the most distinguished son of God. *Son of God* was the appellation John heard by the voice from heaven, and he keeps strictly to it.

### SECTION XIII.

*The Disciples of John, and Nathaniel attend Jesus.*

*John* i. 35—51.

It is observed by early Christian writers, that *John* is the only evangelist who gives an account of the first part of the ministry of Jesus. Indeed he appears to have been best acquainted with it, having probably been one of Jesus's first disciples, after having been the disciple of the Baptist, and to have accompanied him in his first journey from Jordan to Galilee, where he was probably present at his first miracle, that of changing water into wine. The fol-



lowing narrative is so circumstantial, that it appears to have been the composition of an eye-witness, and written with that simplicity which distinguishes the historical writings of Scripture in general, and those of John in particular. This view of it is a sufficient proof of the veracity of the writer.

35. The *day after* the testimony that John gave to Jesus on receiving the deputation of the Scribes and Pharisees to him.

37. One of these was probably *John*, the writer of this gospel.

39. About our four in the afternoon, or towards evening.\*

41. This was a natural conjecture, but not authorized by any thing John had said. The disciples of John, having a high opinion of their master, might conclude that a person so superior to him as Jesus was declared to be, could be no other than the Messiah; and they might think that though John was not the Elias, the true Elias would make his appearance in due time, and anoint Jesus, which was the chief thing they expected, or that the Jews now expect, from Elias. They say that he is not to appear till the day before the Messiah will be revealed.

42. *Thou art Simon, &c.* "According to John, Jesus gave the name of *Peter*, or *Cephas*, to Simon, before the time that Matthew represents it as given."†

It is customary in the East for persons to take new names from circumstances that occur in the course of their lives, and sometimes they are called by the one or the other indifferently. So Peter is sometimes called *Simon*, which was his original name, as when Jesus says to him, (*John* xxi. 15.) *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?*

45. We are not to infer from hence that there are distinct prophecies in the books of Moses concerning the Messiah; but such was the construction which was usually put upon several passages both in the writings of Moses, and in the Psalms, by the Jews of that age. Moses, however, foretells that glorious state of the Jewish nation in the latter days, to which the promulgation of Christianity itself, and consequently the mission of Christ, would be introductory. This *Nathaniel* is "supposed to be the same person with *Bartholomew*, one of the twelve apostles."‡

48. The Jews, living in a hot climate, took particular pleasure in sitting under the shade of fig-trees, and other

\* *Pearce*, l. p. 466.

† *Ibid.* pp. 465, 467. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 467.

trees of thick foliage, through which the rays of the sun could not penetrate. There they might read, meditate, or pray; and it is probable that in some such pious manner Nathaniel had been employed.

50. This seems to have been an acknowledgment on the part of Jesus himself that he was the Messiah; and he certainly never denied it, but on the contrary did every thing to lead the people to *conclude* it. But he made no public declaration to that purpose, and long after this, when (probably in consequence of his saying nothing about it, and especially his not assuming what were deemed the essential characters of the Messiah) the apostles themselves seem to have abandoned the idea, he informed them of it, but as a thing they were not to publish.\*

51. *Ye shall see heaven open, &c.* This must be a figurative expression, denoting the manifest signs of the presence of God with Jesus in his miraculous works, &c., so that there would be a visible intercourse between heaven and earth, such as was represented to Jacob in the vision of the ladder, on which angels were seen ascending and descending.†

## SECTION XIV.

### *The Marriage Feast at Cana.*

*John* ii. 1—12.

WE are now entering on the consideration of the proper life of Jesus, when he began to appear in public, and work miracles in confirmation of his divine mission. This must have appeared an extraordinary circumstance to the Jews, whose ancestors had seen miracles, but none of that generation, or of many preceding ones.

The miracles of Jesus were of two kinds. In general they were instances of benevolence as well as of power. This which we are about to consider was a conjunction of both; as his walking on the sea, his stilling a tempest, and making the barren fig-tree to wither, were chiefly of the

\* Nathaniel's "acknowledgment seems to have been very coolly received by Jesus, and accepted only as it discovered a good disposition of mind in him to become one of his disciples." *Pearce*, I. p. 468.

† It "seems to mean only this, that his disciples should be witnesses of a communication between him and heaven." *Ibid.* See Vol. XI. p. 91.



latter kind. None of them were accompanied with any marks of ostentation, or had his own relief or advantage for their object. It is probable, from the course of the narrative, that only a small number of the miracles are recorded by any of the evangelists; but those that are, were, no doubt, the most remarkable, and they were all attended with such circumstances as make it evident that there was no deception, or trick, in the conduct of them.

1. This was *the third day* from their setting out on their journey to Galilee, mentioned *Chap. i. 43*. From other circumstances too, it appears that from Jerusalem to Galilee was a journey of three days on foot. Thus Jesus when he was in Galilee, says, *Luke xiii. 33*, "I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." The distance was about sixty miles.

3. Though it is probable that *the mother of Jesus* was acquainted with his power of working miracles, it does not certainly follow that he had actually performed any. She must have known the testimony of John to Jesus, and probably he had informed her of the particulars of his temptation, which implied his power of working miracles, the tempter having bid him change the stones into bread, and he declined, not from a want of power, but not to tempt God.

As no mention is made of Joseph, the husband of Mary, either on this occasion, or on any other in the course of the history, it is probable that he was dead before this time.

4. That is, the proper season for working miracles *is not yet come*.

This style of address, however it may appear to us, was usual with the ancients when the greatest respect was intended.\* The same observation will apply to Jesus saying to his mother, *What hast thou to do with me?* In the very same language (τι ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ) *Jephtha* addressed the king of the Ammonites.†

5. It is plain from the order that Mary gave to the servants, that she understood her son as consenting to, rather than rejecting, her request.‡ At least there must have been

\* "Cyrus thus addresseth the queen of the Armenians, Ἀλλὰ σὺ ὦ γυναι, (*Cyrop. L. iii.*) and servants their ladies in Sophocles." Turner in *Harm.* 1780. See *Pearce, I. pp. 469, 470.*

† See *Judges xi. 12.* LXX. (P.)

‡ Turner in *Harm.* 1780.

some circumstance in the discourse or behaviour of Jesus which indicated as much, though he might not think proper to act as at her suggestion.

6. This *firkin* might be the Hebrew *bath*, which contained about four gallons and a half.\*

7. This great quantity of water that was changed into wine, shews that there was no deception in the case. For though a small quantity of water might, by slight of hand, be made to disappear, and an equal quantity of wine to take its place; in the same manner as it is probable that blood had been substituted for water in the pretended miracle of the Egyptian magicians; this could not have been done with so large a quantity of water as was employed on this occasion; and still less in the miracle performed by Moses, when all the water in the river Nile was changed. Besides, it was not Jesus, or his disciples, but the servants of the house that brought the water.

10. This encomium given by a person who was ignorant of the manner in which the wine was procured, proves the reality of the change, and the excellence of its quality.

The word in the original, which is here rendered, *when men have well drunk*, affords no foundation for supposing that any of the company were intoxicated. It is often used to denote drinking so as to produce cheerfulness, but within the limits of sobriety. It is evident from the pleasantry of the governor of the feast, that he at least was sober enough to distinguish the quality of the wine he drank.†

11. By this miracle the disciples of Jesus were confirmed in their belief of his being the great prophet which John had announced him to be; and it is probable that at this time they would suppose him to be *the Messiah*, and would continue in that belief till they saw he took no steps to assume that kingly power, which they thought to be essential to that character. But though on this account, it is probable their faith in his being the Messiah was much staggered, and perhaps altogether abandoned, they still adhered to him as a great prophet.

12. Jesus's parents and himself were of Nazareth, that, in my opinion, being his native place, and from this circumstance he was called *a Nazarene*,‡ it being usual with the Jews to give persons an appellation from the place of their nativity; and both the Jews in general, and our Lord's

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 313, 314; *Pearce*, I. p. 470.

† *Turner in Harm.* 1780. See *Pearce*, I. pp. 470, 471.

‡ See *supra*, p. 23.



own disciples after his resurrection, usually called him *Jesus of Nazareth*. But the family of Jesus seems to have removed from that place to *Capernaum*, a little before the first Passover which Jesus attended, in his new and public character, at Jerusalem.

## SECTION XV.

### *The Conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus.*

*John* ii. 13—25; iii. 1—21.

**JOHN** ii. 13. According to the law of Moses, every male of a proper age was obliged to attend at the place which God should fix upon for that purpose, three times every year, viz. at the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost and of Tabernacles. Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem on these occasions, and it was such an opportunity of making himself generally known, as could not have been found in any other country, and on this account much less time was necessary for his public ministry. Indeed, not only men, but women who could conveniently do it, attended. Here he was sure to meet with the most pious and well-informed of his countrymen, and whatever he did to attract notice could not but be soon known in the most distant parts of the country.

In this place we find an account of his cleansing the Temple, which the other evangelists refer to the last time of his visiting Jerusalem; and that appears to me to be its proper place in the history.\* I am almost inclined to think that the account of the conference with Nicodemus, which immediately follows, and is connected with this, is out of its place, and should also be referred to the last Passover; so that the 12th verse of the second chapter ought to be followed by the 22nd verse of the third chapter. This will make a much more consistent history.

There are other evident transpositions in this gospel of John. Some have been clearly pointed out by learned men, and there may be others which have not been suspected. The probability is, that John, being very old when he wrote his gospel, did it in separate parts, and perhaps with the assistance of others, who wrote from the accounts he gave them, and who put the different parts together as well as

\* See this opinion maintained by *Pearce*, I. pp. 471, 472.

they could. This was a matter of small consequence ; but the dying testimony, as it were, of so old an apostle, the substance of what he was able to recollect of his Master's actions and discourses, especially such as had been omitted by the other evangelists, must have been much valued, in whatever manner their different parts were arranged.

According to all the other evangelists, Jesus began to preach in Galilee after this Passover. It appears, however, from this evangelist, if there be nothing misplaced in his gospel, that Jesus did work miracles, which would not have been without *teaching*, at his first Passover, though we have no account of the particulars.

23. By *believing on him*, we are only to understand their conviction that he was a teacher sent from God : for he certainly had not announced himself, as the Messiah, to the people in general.

24, 25. He did not put any confidence in them, or perhaps admit them to the number of his professed disciples, or followers ; well knowing that they had not the proper qualifications for adherence to him.

III. 1. This discourse with *Nicodemus* seems to be introduced as an illustration, or proof, of what he had said of Jesus' *knowing what was in man*, or the real views of men, which he might be able to do in part by his own natural sagacity, but chiefly, as it should seem, by divine communication.

3. This conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, at which it is probable that this evangelist, as well as others of the apostles, were present, has more difficulty in it than any other part of the gospel history.\* I have seen it at different times in different lights. This is probably owing to much of it being omitted, and a want of connexion between the several parts. There appears, for example, no connexion between the words of Nicodemus and this reply of Jesus ; but we may suppose that after Nicodemus had acknowledged that he must have a divine commission, he concluded that *the kingdom of God*, which both Jesus and John had declared to be at hand, was certainly approaching ; but that he saw no reason why men should be baptized into that belief, which John, and no doubt our Saviour after him, had required. Neither Jesus nor John had said any thing about being *born again*. But this baptizing, as it was conducted by John and our Saviour, might well bear to be so characterized, accord-

\* See the paraphrase by *Hallett*, III. pp. 306—309.



ing to the Jewish phraseology. And this is the more probable, as, when any Gentile became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, (in consequence of which he was both baptized and circumcised,) he was said to be *born again*, entering as it were upon a new kind of life. Jesus therefore saying that a man must be *born again* before he can *see the kingdom of God*, might only mean to assure Nicodemus that both John and himself had sufficient authority for baptizing even Jews on their profession of repentance, as a preparation for the approaching kingdom of God; though, conceiving themselves already to be of the family of God, they might think there was no need of such a ceremony to introduce them into it.

It is something remarkable that the *Hindoos* speak of a second birth from acquiring a knowledge of their *vedas*, which may be called their *scriptures*; and the phrase *twice-born* is in a manner synonymous to a *Bramin*.

4. That Jesus had not used the particular phrase before, is pretty evident from the surprise which Nicodemus expresses, and he no doubt intended by this means to draw the true meaning of his language from him.

5, 6. Here Jesus informs Nicodemus that the *new birth* he spake of, is being *born of water and of the spirit*; and as John had declared his authority for baptizing with water, and had said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit, it is most probable that these were the things referred to by Jesus in this conversation. Some have, however, supposed that being *born of water* means the natural birth of every man, which they say the Jews so expressed; and that this is opposed to being *born of the spirit*, which signifies either a change of temper and disposition of mind, equivalent to a man's entering a new life, or to the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They therefore suppose that being *born of water*, and *born of the flesh*, mean the same thing. But I rather incline to the supposition that by being *born of the flesh* our Lord meant a *natural birth*, and the privileges consequent upon it; and by being *born of the spirit*, the new birth, which, though begun by baptism with water, would be completed by baptizing with the holy spirit.

What we render *born again* may be also rendered *born from above*, and the meaning then will be, every person who is received into the kingdom of God must be born of God, or have an introduction into it suitable to its nature; still, however, referring to the miraculous gifts of the spirit, and not, as I imagine, to an inward change of temper, though

that will, no doubt, be necessary to every man's admission into the kingdom of heaven.

Nicodemus *came to Jesus by night*, privately, but our Lord, by insisting upon baptism, expressed by being *born of water*, as well as of the spirit, declares the necessity of an *open profession* at all hazards, agreeably to his language upon other occasions. This makes it still more probable that being *born of water* means being baptized with water, and not a natural birth.

8. This illustration is not very clear. The same word we render *spirit* signifies also a *wind*, and thence Jesus might be led to explain the one by the other; and to say that, whenever that which he had expressed by being *born of the spirit* should come to pass, those on whom it took place would be no more able to account for it than a man acted upon by a strong wind, who could only feel its effects, but could not understand its course; and this being a reference to a future event, it is no wonder Nicodemus could not understand it.

10. There is great difficulty in conceiving how our Lord could be surprised at Nicodemus's not understanding him. But he might presume that a person well versed in all the Jewish learning might have apprehended his meaning sooner, especially as the effects of the prophetic spirit are often mentioned in the Old Testament, and some of them were sufficiently similar to what was to take place on the promulgation of the gospel.

11. Here Jesus intimates that, whatever difficulty there might be in Nicodemus's understanding what he said, what he declared came from God, and that he had the most satisfactory evidence of it, equal to that which any man could have had of what he had seen and known himself. This phrase, however, of *speaking what we know*, and *testifying what we have seen*, is so much the language of an eye and ear witness, that some have supposed the words to be those of the evangelist; especially as John makes use of the same phrase on other occasions. They therefore suppose that Christ's address to Nicodemus ends at the tenth verse, and the evangelist speaks to the end of the chapter. But the phrase *Verily, verily, I say unto thee*, is so characteristic of our Saviour, that it seems impossible to admit the interpretation. We do not find this language used by any other person.

12. It is not necessary to suppose that the epithet *earthly* is applicable to the subject of our Lord's discourse; because



the phrase might be proverbial, denoting that the truths he had to reveal were as much more sublime than those he had informed him of, as heaven is above the earth. He then proceeds to allude to some of those doctrines, especially that concerning his death, and the effects of it in the propagation of the gospel, of which no Jew had any apprehension. It was, however, our Lord's custom to say things which could not be fully understood at the time of delivering them, but only when they were reflected upon afterwards.

*John the Baptist* adopts the same figurative expression when he says, *ver. 31, He that is of the earth, is earthly, &c.*; meaning not that Jesus was more from heaven than himself, or that his doctrine, properly speaking, was more from God, which was indeed impossible; but that the mission of Jesus had a much greater object than his, as much as heaven is above earth, an expression used by the Psalmist.

13. In order to speak of heavenly things, a man must have been in heaven; and this could not be said of any person with so much propriety as of Jesus, who having had the most intimate communication with God, who is always spoken of as being *in heaven*, may be said to have been there too, and consequently to have *come down from heaven*, nay, as it is here expressed, to be *in heaven*, at present, on account of the intimate presence of God with him. And this is not to be understood as if no person had been in heaven in this sense besides Jesus, for the phrase is nothing more than a Hebrew mode of comparison, according to which any thing is denied of one which is true in a higher sense of another. Thus when it is said, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, the meaning is not that God properly hated Esau, but that he preferred Jacob to him. What is here said, therefore, of Jesus being in heaven, is only figurative language, and is by no means to be understood literally, as if he had been actually in heaven, and came down from thence; though, as has been observed, what is not at all unnatural to suppose, that during his communication with God, subsequent to his baptism, he might imagine that he had actually been in heaven, and therefore had actually come down from thence. Least of all are we authorized to infer, from such expressions as these, that Jesus had pre-existed, and had been in some other world or state before he came into this.

This verse, and all that follows to the end of the chapter, may be supposed to be the language of the evangelist, though I see no improbability in their being supposed to be the words of Jesus himself.

14, 15. \* Here our Lord alludes to his death upon the cross, and the effect of faith in him, similar to the effect of faith of the Israelites, when they looked towards the brazen serpent, which Moses exposed to their view in the Wilderness.

18—21. In this language our Lord reproves the incredulity of the Jewish nation in general, notwithstanding they had had abundant evidence of his divine mission. At this time, however, they had seen but few of his miracles, and therefore the observation will better suit the character of the evangelist, who wrote a long time after all the events, unless we suppose this part of the history to be out of its place, and that it ought to have been introduced among the events of the last Passover.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* iii. (2.) We cannot but acknowledge that thou art a teacher sent with some commission from God to instruct us, because no person except one commissioned and empowered by God could do these miracles which we see thou dost; and I am come to shew my respect for thee, and to make farther inquiries concerning thy doctrine and pretensions. (3.) Jesus answered, If you consider me as a teacher sent from God, you must not content yourself with applying to me in a private manner, but must make an open profession of your faith by the rite of baptism, as you oblige your proselytes to do when you say that then they are born again. (4.) Nicodemus replied, To baptize Jews, the children of Abraham, and who are already the sons of God, appears to me to be as extraordinary as a new birth to those who are already full grown, and even advanced to old age. (5.) Jesus answered, The kingdom of God is, however, to be introduced both by the baptism of water, and by the spirit, or the miraculous effusion of divine gifts; and every disciple of mine, in this age of the promulgation of the gospel, will partake of both. (6.) The privileges of the gospel are not things that a man can inherit by natural descent, but are of a spiritual nature. (7.) And therefore do not wonder that it should be required, even of Jews, that they be converted to it, and baptized into it, just as Gentiles are, when they become Jews; assuming a new and heavenly disposition.

\* "This verse seems to be an interpolation. It is, in the original, word for word, the same with what is found in the latter part of the next verse following, though some small difference was made between the two in *Eng. Trans.*, but for what reason it is not obvious to conceive." *Pearce*, l. p. 477.



(8.) Do not express so much surprise at my saying you must be *born of the spirit*; as the *wind*, though the nature and the cause of it be not understood by you, produces great and visible effects; so shall it be when the spirit of which I speak shall exert its power.

(9, 10.) Nicodemus acknowledging that he was not able to comprehend these things, Jesus replies, Art thou a master in Israel, one who professes a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and art so little apprized of the nature of the *spirit*, by which many persons in former times have been actuated, so as to become quite other persons than they were before, and do things of which they were before incapable?

(11.) But not to explain at present how these things might have been understood from the Scriptures, I do assure you, that what I now assert may be depended upon, as what I have received in commission from God, though the Jews in general do not receive my doctrine as from God.

(12, 13.) If you hesitate to admit these first and elementary principles of the gospel, such as John the Baptist has already taught you, how can you receive the more sublime truths of it, to which your prejudices are still more averse? And yet they are such things as I, who am in intimate communion with the Father, have in commission from him, some of which are the following important particulars:

(14.) You expect a temporal and triumphant Messiah, but you will have a suffering one, who will even be exposed upon the cross, as Moses exposed the serpent in the Wilderness, and for a similar salutary purpose.

(15.) That whosoever, of whatever nation he be, that shall look up to him, or believe in him, and obey, may not perish, but have everlasting life. (16, 17.) It was for this gracious purpose that God sent him into the world, viz. that not the Jews only, as you suppose, but that the Gentiles also, might be saved; whereas you expect that the Messiah will triumph over, trample upon, and oppress the Gentile world.

(18.) And such are, and will be, the testimonials of my divine mission, that whosoever does not admit them will be liable to just censure and condemnation. (19.) For the evidence will be such, as none but the wilfully blind, those whose minds are perverted by vicious prejudices, can resist. Such will naturally be averse to the gospel and its evidence.

(20.) For we see universally, that they who are conscious of guilt are averse to receive that truth, by which their vices would be detected and exposed. (21.) But they who are of a candid and ingenuous disposition, and have nothing to

reproach themselves for, fear nothing, and are ready to receive all new truths. Their hearts and lives being worthy of God, every doctrine that is true can only make them appear to more advantage.

## SECTION XVI.

### *The last Testimony of John, and his Imprisonment.*

*John* iii. 22—36; *Luke* iii. 19, 20.

WE have here the last account of *John's* ministry, and his express acknowledgment of the superiority of *Jesus* to himself. This is a circumstance greatly in favour of the truth of his divine mission. For, being in possession of a great popularity, and consequently within reach of the fruits of it, whatever they were, if he had been an impostor, he would have availed himself of his situation, and never have given place to another, who had none of the advantages he possessed, and by whose success it does not appear he had any prospect of being benefited.

*John* iii. 22. Except that *Jesus* worked miracles, there does not appear to have been any difference between him and *John*, as *public teachers*. The doctrine of both was the same; *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; and both of them baptized, though *Jesus* did not do this in his own person, on account of its being a servile office which his disciples were ready to discharge for him. For if we may judge from the few examples we have of the mode of administering it, both the person baptizing, and the person baptized, went into the water together; and it was not sufficient that the person baptized should plunge himself in water in the presence of the other. That baptism was administered by immersing the whole body in water, cannot be doubted. But as all that was represented by it was *cleansing from sin*, and this is sufficiently expressed by the application of water to any part of the body, I do not see that exactness in the outward ceremony is at all necessary in cases in which it would be attended with inconvenience; though our Saviour and his apostles, neither finding nor foreseeing any inconvenience from dipping the whole body, have left us neither precept nor example of any other practice. In Judea, where bathing for the purpose of purification was frequent, and the climate warm, plunging in water is generally a great gratification. The primitive Christians must have seen the thing



in this light, when, without any objection being made to it, they satisfied themselves with only sprinkling those who were sick.

25. Probably about the necessity of his baptism, which represented *purifying*.

27. Had John openly announced Jesus as the Messiah, it is probable this person\* would have called him by that name, and not at all that he would have expressed surprise or concern that the people should flock to him. It shewed great attachment to his master that he should be offended at the preference which was given to Jesus, when John himself had acknowledged him to be his superior.

28. The phrase *before him* does not mean before the Christ or the Messiah, but only *before that person* of whom you are speaking, namely, before Jesus. This is evident from the original, though the contrary is intimated in our translation.†

29. As *John* had before expressed his inferiority to *Jesus*, by saying that he was not worthy to stoop down and untie his sandals, he now uses another comparison, calling Jesus the bridegroom, and himself his friend, who would rejoice in his happiness and honours.

31. ‡ This figurative expression, signifying that Jesus was as much superior to him as heaven is to the earth, was explained before, and seems to have been common with the Jews.

34. Distinguished by a profusion of the gifts of the spirit, which himself was not.

35. This does not imply that all power was given to Jesus at that time, but only that it would be given him. So when Jesus says, after his resurrection, [*Matt.* xxviii. 18,] "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," we are only to understand it will be conferred upon him at his second coming in his proper kingdom, which commences at the day of judgment. He is now, according to his own comparison, gone to receive his kingdom, or be invested with it, and will then come to exercise it.

36. By *believing in Christ*, we are always to understand faith with its natural consequences, repentance and obe-

\* Dr. Priestley appears to suppose that only *one* person had addressed Jesus, ver. 26. See *Pearce* on ver. 25, I. pp. 478, 479; *Newcome* in *Improved Version*, p. 218.

† See *Theol. Repos.* V. p. 71. (P.)

‡ "This verse and all that follows to the end of the chapter may be considered as the words of the evangelist, and not of the Baptist." *Harm.* 1780, p. 29. See *Weistein* in *Pearce*, I. p. 480.

dience. However, mere unbelief, when the evidences of the gospel are fairly proposed, implies something wrong in the state of a man's mind, and therefore deserving of censure.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* iii. (27.) Do not think that I shall take any umbrage at the greater success of the ministry of Jesus. The rank and office of us both was fixed by God, and therefore what we must acquiesce in. (28.) You must acknowledge that I never pretended to be the Messiah, but only to be sent to prepare the way for the person at whose success you take umbrage. (29.) I rejoice in his honour and happiness, as a friend, who assists at a marriage-feast, partakes of the joy of the bridegroom. (30, 31.) In comparison with his commission, mine relates to earthly things, and his to heavenly ones. (32.) And though the people may not flock to him so readily, and so generally, as they have done to me, his superior commission is as authentic as my inferior one; for he delivers only what he has seen and heard from God. (33.) He, therefore, who believes in him, believes in God himself. (34.) To me, and to other prophets, but a small portion of the spirit of God is given; but to him the divine communications are without measure; for the Divine Being acts and speaks by him in such a manner as he has never thought proper to do by any other person whatever. (35.) Such is the love and regard that God bears to him, that he will commit to him all power both in heaven and earth. (36.) He will then give him power to raise the dead, and to give everlasting life to all his faithful followers; and all who obstinately refuse to receive and obey his gospel will be excluded from that everlasting life, and suffer the most exemplary punishment.

### SECTION XVII.

*The Discourse of Jesus with the Woman of Samaria.*

*John* iv. 1—42; *Matt.* iv. 12; *Mark* i. 14, 15.

THE Samaritans lived in the very centre of Judea, worshipped the same God, and used the same rites with the Jews, but were inveterate enemies to them. They were, in part, descendants from the ten tribes, the greatest part of whom were made captive by the Assyrians, but mixed with



other distant nations, and settled in the same district by their conquerors. The different people for some time retained their different worship; but the country being depopulated by war, and therefore infested with wild beasts, they imagined, according to the ideas which generally prevailed in the Heathen world, that this was a judgment upon them for not worshipping the God of the country in which they were settled. On this account, one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria, *came*, as we read 2 *Kings* xvii. 28, *and dwelt in Bethel*, and instructed them from the books of Moses, which the priests had in their possession.\*

The Temple of Jerusalem being destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the Samaritans proposed to join with the Jews, after their return from the Captivity, in rebuilding it; but their proposal was rejected, (*Ezek.* iv. 1—3,)† and other causes of dissension arising, they erected a temple on Mount *Gerezim*, performing the same worship with the Jews. They also continued as free from idolatry as the Jews themselves; and we shall find they had the same expectation of the Messiah. These Samaritans, though much reduced in number, still subsist; and, what is of unspeakable value, they preserve among themselves, in the ancient Hebrew character, copies of the books of Moses, which, as they had no friendly intercourse with the Jews since the Babylonish Captivity, there can be no doubt were the same with those in use before that event, though subject to such variations as will always be occasioned by frequent transcribing. And the variations from our present copies, which were those of the Jews, are so inconsiderable, that by this means we have a proof that those important books have been preserved uncorrupted for the space of almost three thousand years, so as to leave no room to doubt that they are the same that Moses actually wrote. It appears, however, to the learned, that the Samaritan copies are more perfect than those of the Jews, the latter having omitted many clauses and passages which they thought to be superfluous, but which are both agreeable to ancient simplicity, and are sometimes necessary to make a perfect sense. It is hoped, therefore, that in future translations of the books of Moses, those additions will be inserted in their proper places.

*John* iv. 3. We see how sensible Jesus was of the umbrage his preaching would give the rulers of the Jews. That they looked upon him with a jealous eye, appears by Nico-

\* See, on ver. 26, Vol. XI. p. 469.

† See Vol. XII. p. 47.

demus's coming *by night*. Though Jesus knew it was not in the power of the rulers to defeat the purposes of God in his mission, he was cautious not unnecessarily to expose himself to their resentment; so that he chose at present to avoid the country near Jerusalem, and open his commission, as it were, in Galilee, a part of the country populous, but distant from the capital.

9. *Have no friendly intercourse.* The word *συγχρωταί* cannot mean, as in our translation, *have no dealings*; for the disciples were at that time going into the town to buy food; and passing, as all the people of Galilee at least must frequently do, through Samaria, that kind of intercourse could not be avoided. *Pearce* would render the word, *Use not any thing together with the Samaritans*; as that they will not drink out of the same cup, or out of the same well, with them.\*

10. *Living, or running water.* † Jacob's well was probably a reservoir for rain water, such being common in the East. ‡

Here we have an example of the figurative and enigmatical manner of speaking which Jesus so frequently adopted, with no other view that we can imagine but to excite the attention of his hearers, and impress their memories with something they might reflect upon with advantage afterwards.

11. *Thou hast nothing to draw with.* It is usual in Eastern countries to take leathern buckets and lines with them, there being no such things left at the wells. §

12. *His cattle.* *Θρεμματα* imports servants as well as cattle.

14. The *water* was his *doctrine*, which he afterwards, in *John* vi. 51, calls *bread that came down from heaven*, and which he says was himself. ||

18. *He whom thou now hast.* *Pearce* prefers the reading of *σοι* for *σου*, and would render it, *thou hast no husband*; according to which it can only be inferred that this woman had been married to five men in succession, and not that she lived in fornication at present. And certainly the respect that was shewn to her by Christ himself, and by her fellow-

\* These words are probably those of the evangelist, and not of the woman. *Wakefield*. (P.) See his *Translation*, 1791, p. 95; *Notes to Pearce*, I. p. 482.

† See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 95; *Pearce*, I. p. 482.

‡ See *Harmer*, I. p. 422. (P.) *Maundrell*, pp. 62, 63.

§ See *Rauwolff* in *Ray's Collection*, II. pp. 317, 318; *Harmer*, I, pp. 420, 421.

|| See *Theol. Repos.* VI. p. 419.



citizens, renders it improbable that she should have been so infamous as our present copies leave room to suppose.\*

19, 20. As soon as the woman perceived that Jesus was a prophet, she endeavoured to learn whether her nation, or the Jews, were right with respect to their different places of worship.

The Samaritans received only the books of Moses, not having originally procured any books besides those which were sufficient to instruct them in the mode of worshipping the true God, and they would not receive any from the Jews afterwards. Now in the books of Moses no particular place is mentioned as the centre of worship, but the preference seems there to be given to Mount *Gerizim*, for several religious purposes, and one remarkable passage of this kind the Jews have certainly omitted in their copies of the book of *Deuteronomy*. For these reasons, and because Mount *Gerizim* was within their territory, the Samaritans thought they were justified in building a temple upon it.

22. This phrase ought not to be interpreted literally, for the Samaritans worshipped the same God with the Jews. It may perhaps be said to be an expression of general disapprobation, intimating only that, with respect to the differences between them, the Jews were right, and the Samaritans wrong.†

In the former part of this conversation the woman of Samaria had discovered that Jesus was a prophet, in consequence of his having told her such particulars of her own history as she was persuaded he could not by any natural means have been acquainted with. We must now attend to the remainder of the conversation, and some particulars which followed it.

25. The Samaritans, we see here, expected a *Messiah*‡ as well as the Jews, and considered him as a great *prophet*, who would reveal the whole will of God. Whether, like the Jews, they expected him in the character of a *king*, does not appear. As the Samaritans had only the five books of Moses, (at least they are not now in possession of any more of the Jewish Scriptures,) it is probable they were not led astray by any misconstruction of the latter prophets, as the Jews were. Besides, they would be less ready to expect such a deliverer and prince as the Jews did, as the Messiah was to

\* See *Pearce*, I. pp. 483, 484.

† See *Mede*, p. 49; *Hallett*, III. pp. 30—34.

‡ Called *Christ* are "the words of the evangelist, not of the woman." *Beza* in *Bowyer's Conjectural Emendations*, 1763, p. 48.

be of the house of David ; and therefore a Jew, from whom they could not expect any favour, though they might hope that, as in their opinion their worship was agreeable to the original design of Moses, the Messiah might decide in their favour, notwithstanding both David and his son Solomon had worshipped at Jerusalem.

26. This is the first explicit declaration of Jesus himself of his being the *Messiah* ; and it is extraordinary that it should be made to a woman of Samaria, and with whom he had so slight an acquaintance. It is the more extraordinary, as it is evident, from subsequent transactions, that Jesus had not acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, even to the apostles, but had left them, as well as the rest of the Jews, to form their opinion of his proper character from his works and his conduct. This is plain from his asking his apostles what the Jews, and themselves in particular, thought of him, and from other circumstances to be considered hereafter. But the discovery being made to Samaritans only, it was not likely to be attended with much inconvenience by spreading among the Jews.\* It is a remarkable circumstance that this declaration does not appear to have produced any further conversation on the subject, and that the woman, when she told the story to her countrymen, should only lead them to think that Jesus was the Messiah from his having told her the particulars of her private life. She does not say he had avowed it, nor does it appear that Jesus made any declaration on the subject, though he preached there more than a whole day : for the people seem to have inferred from his discourses only, that he was the Messiah.

27. It does not appear that the disciples overheard any part of our Lord's conversation, so that they must have learnt the particulars either from their master or the woman, when she told the story to her countrymen. But the disciples would not be disposed to credit her, and would hardly be likely to interrogate Jesus upon a subject on which he had not thought proper to explain himself to them. They might, therefore, continue ignorant of his being the Messiah.

28. The circumstances of this woman's leaving *her water-pot*, or bucket, shews her extreme eagerness to inform her countrymen of what she had discovered. Indeed, nothing could be more interesting to them than what she had to communicate. It is observable, however, that though Jesus had asked the woman to give him to drink, it is not said that

\* See *Pearce*, I. pp. 485, 486.



she did it. Perhaps, seeing the arrival of the disciples, she might leave her bucket, that they might use it themselves, her services being then unnecessary.

32. Another example of that enigmatical way of speaking so frequently used by Jesus, and designed to leave a deeper impression upon the memory. On this occasion, his calling the opportunity that now occurred to do the will of God, by serving mankind, his *daily bread*, was calculated to lead his disciples to consider their future duty, which also was the instruction of mankind, as the proper business of their lives, as well as the procuring of food.

34. i. e. I am more solicitous about this than food. The only use of food is to prolong life, in order to discharge the duties of it. We do not come into the world to eat and drink, but we came into the world and eat and drink, in order to answer the great designs of Providence in creating and providing for us.

35. By this time, probably, the people of the city were coming in crowds to meet Jesus, and as he had said that it was *his meat to do the will of him that sent him*, he saw before him an abundant harvest or provision of food of this kind, in doing the will of God, who sent him to preach the gospel.\* He seems to make use of a proverbial expression, which intimated that, in general, *four months* intervened between seed-time and *harvest*, whereas he had just sown his seed, by his conversation with the woman, and the harvest immediately appeared, what he had said having already produced a great effect.†

36. Having spoken of the harvest of God, and represented his disciples as the reapers, he takes this opportunity of assuring them, that their labours would not go unrewarded; that himself, who had sowed, and they who would reap, would be happy together in the fruit of their labours.

39. It is evident that the faith of these people was not founded on her declaration that Jesus had told her that he was the Messiah, but only that he had told her all that she had done.

40. Or a part of two days, according to the Jewish phraseology. He arrived presently after noon, and probably left them after passing two nights in the city.

\* "Perhaps also our Lord speaks with a view to the reception which the gospel should receive hereafter among the Gentiles, in contemplation whereof, in *ver. 38*, he speaks in the past time of a thing yet future." *Turner in Harm. 1780, p. 23.*

† See Mann *De Veris Annis* (p. 183); *Bowyer, p. 49; Pearce, l. pp. 486, 487.*

42.\* The Samaritans considered him as the Saviour of the world, though in what sense does not appear.† It is remarkable, however, that they do not say he would be Saviour of the Jews only, or of themselves, but of all the world; probably applying to him the promise made to *Abraham*, that in him *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*.

## SECTION XVIII.

### *The Cure of the Nobleman's Son at Capernaum.*

*John* iv. 43—54.

WE now come to the second miracle wrought in *Galilee*, which, like the first, is omitted by the other evangelists, though of a very extraordinary nature, being the cure of a person at a great distance from the place where Jesus was. But it is so in appearance principally, for Jesus always ascribed all his miracles to God, and he is every where present.

*John* iv. 44. Something is probably omitted in this place, perhaps by transcribers; for Jesus's *own country* was *Galilee*, and thence he is called *the Galilean*, an appellation by which his followers went a long time, and therefore to have acted on the maxim he here mentions, he ought to have avoided all *Galilæa*. It was probably *Nazareth*, which is more expressly called his own country in *Mark* vi. 1, that he now avoided. We may therefore suppose that the evangelist wrote to the following purpose:—*He departed thence, and went into Galilee, but not to Nazareth; for Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country.*‡ As Jesus's occupation was a carpenter, he could not be much known beyond the town he lived in, so that he would be as much a stranger in the remoter parts of *Galilee*, as in *Judea*, and consequently might be as well received there.

45. The only miracle he wrought in *Galilee*, before this, was turning water into wine at *Cana*, which was done comparatively in private, and this is not mentioned as the

\* *Wakefield* suspects *the Christ* to be an interpolation, as not found in *Vulg. Copt. and Ethiop. Versions. Notes*, p. 96.

† "Probably they meant only the Jewish world." *Pearce*, I. p. 488. See *supra*, pp. 37, 40.

‡ *Pearce*, I. p. 488. See the Author, *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 113, 114; "Observations on the Harmony," 1780, *Sect. xii.* § 3.



cause of his being so well received in Galilee, but what he had done in Jerusalem, the particulars of which we do not know, but they must have been of a public nature. They were the cause of Nicodemus's resorting to him, as well as of the attention now paid him on his arrival in Galilee. On this account I am more inclined to think that this part of the history is misplaced, and that it belongs to the last passover. The allusion to the death of Jesus in the conference with Nicodemus, which was then at hand, and which would of course be more upon his mind, adds to the probability of this conjecture.

47. From this *nobleman's* applying to Jesus to cure his son, it is probable that the miracles he had wrought at Jerusalem were *cures*, of which most of his miracles consisted, and which were equal proofs of his benevolence and of his divine mission.

It is evident he had no idea of Jesus being able to cure his son without being present; and this is not extraordinary, as before this time probably he had not cured any except when he was present.

48. There does not appear any reason for the reproof, which evidently it is, whether we read the sentence positively, or interrogatively,\* that Jesus gave either to the nobleman, or to the persons in whose presence the conversation past. Perhaps something more might have passed that we do not know.† Perhaps he might think it reasonable that they should have received him as a prophet on the testimony of *John the Baptist*, who, indeed, appears to have been received as such without his working any miracle, merely on account of the dignity of his character and conduct, and the energy of his preaching. But there is, strictly speaking, no proper proof of a divine mission but miracles. For how can we know that the hand of God is in any thing, except we see something done which we are persuaded God only can do?

50. Probably this nobleman did not consider himself as the object of the reproof of Jesus, for he continued his importunity: and that there was no great principle of incredulity in him is evident from his belief when Jesus told him that his son would be restored to health without his going. He did not indeed express the same faith with the centurion of Capernaum, who desired Jesus not to trouble

\* As proposed by Mr. Turner in *Harm.* 1780, p. 33. See *Bowyer*, p. 49.

† "Though Jesus spake this to the nobleman, it is probable that he meant it of the Galilean Jews in general." *Pearce*, I. p. 489.

himself to go to his house; being satisfied that if he did but pronounce the word, his servant would be cured. But the centurion had, no doubt, heard of this very case; whereas this person had not seen or heard any thing of the kind. No wonder, therefore, that the faith of the centurion was superior.

52, 53. The inquiry concerning the precise time of the recovery, was very natural and important, with respect to the share that Jesus had in it; and as it appeared to be at the very time when Jesus pronounced the words, *Thy son liveth*, they were convinced that the cure was in consequence of some power which accompanied the words.

The disorder appears to have been a *fever*, which has a regular and well-known period; so that when it comes to its crisis, either death ensues, or there are signs of recovery. Now as the recovery was such as to convince the family that it was not according to the course of nature, we may presume that it was more complete than the usual course of nature admitted, though no particulars are mentioned. Fevers, by which persons are brought near to death, always leave them in a very languid state. However, in the accounts of many other miracles, we shall see the most indisputable evidence of the cures being quicker, and more complete, than any natural recovery from disorder, so that nothing is wanting in these instances to the fullest proof of the Divine interposition.

## SECTION XIX.

### *The Call of Peter, James and John.*

*Matt.* iv. 13—22; *Mark* i. 16—20; *Luke* v. 1—11.

It is something remarkable, that neither *Matthew*, *Mark*, nor *Luke*, seem to have known any thing of the preaching or miracles of Jesus before his arrival in Galilee, after the first passover; so that if we had not had any other account but theirs, we should have supposed that Jesus opened his commission, as it were, in Galilee; and we shall find in the course of the history, that Jesus is generally considered as having taught in Galilee some time before he preached in Judea. *Peter* himself speaks of the Gospel as first preached in Galilee, *Acts* x. 36, 37: "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by



Jesus Christ.—That word ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.” This, however, will appear less extraordinary, if we consider that none of the disciples attended on Jesus constantly till after his arrival in Galilee; *Matthew*, not till some time after the rest, and *Mark* and *Luke* still later; and they might not choose to give an account of what they did not know themselves, or what was not well known to all; which the transactions before this time, comparatively speaking, were not. Even Peter was not called to attend Jesus till after his arrival in Galilee; and by carefully computing the time, I do not find that we can allow more than a week for all his preaching in Judea, before he returned to Galilee, where the great scenes of this important history opened, and to these we are now to give our attention.

*Matt.* iv. 13. *Matthew* evidently considers Jesus as having lived at *Nazareth* till his settlement, as it may be called, at *Capernaum*. But by *dwelling* he could only mean making it his principal residence; for according to this very evangelist, he was little in that place.\* Probably his mother and the rest of his family might have removed thither.

14. We are not to expect that all the passages in the Old Testament, quoted by writers in the New, had an original reference to the purpose to which they applied them. It was often sufficient for them, if the circumstances they relate could be described in the language of Scripture, to say that such a passage was then *fulfilled*. The Jews were well conversant with the Scriptures, which were read in the synagogue every Sabbath, and no doubt they were much read in private; for the Jews in general were able to read, and had few other books. The Christians, knowing that their Master was noticed in ancient prophecies, and that he was particularly distinguished by the character of the *Messiah*, would probably apply to him more passages than had any proper reference to him.

15. Mr. Mede renders the original passage, which is, *Isaiah* ix. 1, 2, as follows: “Though he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, he shall greatly honour her by way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land

\* See the Author, *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 113, 115.

of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”\* The prophecy was delivered at a time when this country was grievously harassed by the king of Assyria, just before the captivity of the ten tribes.

*By the side of the sea.* The word *παρα*, as *Pearce* shews, signifies, “sometimes *on the side of*, and sometimes *on this side of*, when the western side of Jordan is meant;” and in this place it can only mean the western side. *Leigh* and *Vorstius* say it had the same meaning as *παρα*, *aa*, or *juxta*.†

*Galilee of the Gentiles.*‡ It was in this part of Judea that Solomon gave *Hiram*, king of Tyre, some cities, whence that country was filled with foreigners.§

16. The prophecies here quoted are in the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth chapters of *Isaiah*, who is then probably speaking of the desolation of the country by the Assyrian invasion, and foretelling the restoration of it by the victories of *Hezekiah*. Darkness means distress in general, and light, happiness. It was, however, sufficient for the purpose of the evangelist, that something favourable had been foretold concerning Galilee, and certainly such was the preaching of the Gospel in it; though, far from being confined to it, it only began there.

17. Hence it appears that *Matthew* supposed Jesus not to have preached at all, or not much, before his arrival in Galilee; and what he taught was the same with the preaching of John, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. But the Jews would not understand the propriety of this doctrine, for they expected nothing more than a temporal prince, who would rescue them from the dominion of the Romans, and give them the empire of the world; and for this they already thought themselves sufficiently qualified.

18. It is rather extraordinary that as *Peter* and *Andrew* had been professed disciples of Jesus in Judea, they should not have attended him in his journey to Galilee, but be found following their usual occupation when he arrived there. Probably none of the other three evangelists had ever heard of any former call of these apostles; and though

\* This translation Dr. Priestley had before adopted. See Vol II. p. 180. The first sentence does not appear to be *Mede's*. See *ibid.* Note †, where I gave *Mede's* translation, which is adopted almost *verbatim* by Bishop Lowth. See Vol. XII. p. 161; *Mede's Works*, 1672, Ed. 3, pp. 101, 457.

† See *Pearce*, l. pp. 24, 25.

‡ See *Bowyer*, p. 4; *Bryant*, “On Ancient History,” (pp. 208—210,) in *Dodson's Isaiah*, p. 205.

§ See 1 *Kings* ix. 11, Vol. XI. p. 426; *Pearce*, l. p. 25.



in the account of *John*, which cannot be disputed, they are said to have been *followers of Jesus*, they might not at that time have become his *constant attendants*, and might have laid aside all thoughts of it, so as to require a second call, like that here recorded. We see, however, that in the account of *Luke*, Peter not only calls Jesus *Master*, but at his command readily cast his net after he had despaired of catching any fish, which implies a former knowledge of him and respect for him.

19. We have here an instance of our Lord's happy allusion to what was passing in his presence. He found these men catching fishes, and alluding to their future employment, told them that they would become *fishers of men*, making them converts to his religion, the most honourable of all employments.

We must now attend to another account of what must have been the same transaction with the preceding, given by *Luke*, and in some circumstances different, but not more so than what we find in the best historians, with respect to things of little moment, whose accounts of the greater and most important transactions differ the least. Such differences only prove that the historians did not write in concert, and are favourable to the credibility of their testimony.

*Luke* v. 7. I have sometimes been inclined to think that *Luke* had misplaced this account of the miraculous draught of fishes, since one similar to it is related by *John*, as having happened after the resurrection. That such a mistake should be made by a person who probably was not present, cannot be thought extraordinary. But, on the other hand, that the same miracle should be repeated in different circumstances, is not improbable. At two different times, Jesus fed a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes, and miraculous cures of a similar nature were frequently repeated.

8. *Depart from me.* Peter thought himself unworthy of the presence of so great and holy a prophet as he was now convinced Jesus was, and he was afraid that some evil would befall him on account of his past sins. This idea appears to have been familiar to the Jews.\* So *Gideon* expressed his fear, (*Judges* vi. 22,) because he had seen an angel of God. *Manoah*, the father of *Samson*, expressed

\* *Pearce* translates, "go out from me, i. e. from my ship." He refers to *Deut.* iv. 33, and conjectures that "it was a notion among the Jews that the man was not to live long who saw a great miracle." *Com.* I. pp. 330, 331. On "the present Arab mode" of prostration, see *Harmer*, II. pp. 53, 54.

still greater apprehension on the same account, (*Judges* xiii. 22). So also the widow of *Zarephath* imagined that her son died in consequence of her having received *Elijah* into her house (1 *Kings* xvii. 18): "And she said unto *Elijah*, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

9. Though it is possible that there might be nothing miraculous in this extraordinary draught of fishes, it is evident that *Peter* considered it in that light; and it was highly improbable that *Jesus* should know beforehand that there would be such a number of fishes in any particular part of the sea, at any particular time.

11. Hence we see the apostles had some property. The ship was *Simon's* own, *James* and *John* being partners, and the other ship was probably theirs. On another occasion mention is made of their hiring servants, and *John* had probably a house of his own at Jerusalem, and being known to the high-priest, was probably a person of some distinction. *Matthew* was in public employment, and had probably acquired wealth, as it is said (*Luke* v. 29) that he made a great feast in his house to entertain *Jesus* and his disciples. Hence it appears that the apostles were not needy persons, and that there was some merit in their forsaking all and following *Jesus*. *Peter* mentions this circumstance, *Mark* x. 28, "Lo we have forsaken all and followed thee." There is, therefore, no foundation for what some unbelievers have said, of their having much to gain, and nothing to lose. The apostles, as far as we can learn, were of that class of men whose testimony is always deemed most valuable. For had they been of higher ranks in life, they would have been thought to have been too much within the influence of ambition; and it would with more probability have been said, that they had some prospect of aggrandizing themselves by the scheme; because most persons who have had those views, have been of a pretty high rank in life. The apostles appear to have been honest men, uncorrupted by commerce with the world, and who were, from principle and conviction only, attached to *Jesus*. He neither gave nor promised any thing in this world; and had they thought him to have been an impostor, they must have believed he had nothing to give them in another. Notwithstanding this, they adhered to him through a painful and laborious life, when all prospect of temporal advantage must have vanished, and most of them died in his cause. Certainly



the apostles, who lived with him, must have had the best opportunity of knowing whether he was an impostor or not ; and the facts I have mentioned are not to be accounted for, if he was.

## SECTION XX.

*The Cure of the Demoniac, and of Peter's Wife's Mother.*

*Matt.* iv. 23—25 ; viii. 14—17 ; *Mark* i. 21—38 ;  
*Luke* iv. 14, 15, 31—44 ; vi. 17—19.

JESUS having chosen the principal of his constant attendants, who were afterwards of the number of the *Apostles*, the great scenes of his public ministry now open upon us. It was probably on the evening before the Sabbath that Jesus called *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, who were his first disciples, and that in their company he immediately went into Capernaum, and the day following took them with him to the synagogue, or place of public worship, where the Scriptures were read, and prayer recited every Sabbath day.

*Mark* i. 21. Jesus, though a stranger, was permitted to preach in the synagogues, and it appears to have been the custom, that, with the consent of the rulers of the synagogue, any stranger might do so ; nor is this surprising, for no provision was made for public instruction, in the Jewish synagogues, there being no persons who studied and prepared themselves for it ; so that the exhortation of pious and learned strangers, who might occasionally be present, would naturally be acceptable to them.

*Matt.* iv. 23, 24.\* Jesus healed all that applied to him of any disease, so that there could have been no collusion. The patients were not produced by himself, but offered themselves wherever he was ; and they were not put off till another time, but were instantly and completely cured, whether their disorders in the course of nature were curable or incurable ; and since these cures were wrought before all who chose to attend, nothing is wanting to the fullest proof that he was a teacher sent from God ; since, as *Nicodemus* observed, [*John* iii. 2,] he did such things as no man could have done if God had not been with him.

\* On *Demoniacs* and *Lunatics*, see Mead's *Medica Sacra* (Ch. ix. x.) 1755, pp. 73—102 ; *Wakefield*, pp. 61—63.

viii. 17. The manner in which *Matthew* applies this prophecy, [*Isaiah* liii. 4,] shews in what sense he understood Christ's being said *to bear the sins of men*, viz. bearing or *taking them away*, and not taking them on himself, and thereby becoming liable to punishment for them; for certainly he did not take the bodily infirmities or diseases of men upon himself, but removed them by his power. So likewise he removes the moral disorders of men, the diseases or vices of the mind, by the power of his Gospel.\*

*Mark* i. 22. Probably *the Scribes* did little more than explain the ceremonial of the law of Moses, and teach the people nice distinctions, and ritual observances, or inform them of the traditions of the elders; so that one who reformed vice in the manner of the ancient prophets, such as *John the Baptist* and Jesus, would be a great phenomenon, and certainly Jesus taught morality with an air of greater authority than any who preceded him.

23. The disorder with which this man was afflicted was probably the epilepsy.

It was the opinion of the Jews, as it is to this day, in all countries of the East, that insanity is produced by the agency of evil spirits, who go into men, and disorder their understandings; and consequently that there can be no cure till the evil spirit is cast out. Hence they had recourse to a variety of modes of exorcism, or charms, to compel those evil spirits, whom they called demons, to go out of man.

24. What I have observed being the opinion of all the country, it is not extraordinary that many insane persons should imagine themselves to be possessed, and speak and act in the name of the demons whom they thought to be within them; for there are all degrees of insanity, and many who are most insane have lucid intervals, in which they converse rationally, and receive information from those about them. This *demoniac* had heard of Jesus, and, attending the synagogue, had, no doubt, heard him preach, and his being permitted to be there (for he was not brought with a view to be cured) is a proof that he was not very mad. He, speaking in his own name, or that of the *demon* within him, (for what he says will apply to either,) and conceiving Jesus to be a holy person, or prophet, perhaps the Messiah, for it was soon suspected, we see, that he might be so, expressed his apprehension that he might be

\* See the Author, *Theol. Repos.* I. p. 212; *Pearce*, I. p. 53; *Wakefield*, p. 120; *Dodson's Isaiah*, pp. 324, 325.



come to do him some injury; for such were the apprehensions of the Jews in general when they supposed themselves to be in the presence of an angel, or any very holy person.\*

26. We see how the natural actions of the man were ascribed to the spirit within him. He was evidently much convulsed,† and cried out; and this was, no doubt, the cry of the man himself, being produced by the action of his own organs of speech; and yet, if the expression be literally interpreted, it would imply that it was the *demon* that uttered the cry.

27. We cannot wonder that so much astonishment was expressed by the spectators, when we consider that, though many miracles had been recorded in the sacred books of the Jews, none had been exhibited for more than four hundred years before. The people were astonished at the doctrine and authority with which he taught, as well as the miracle. *What thing is this? What new doctrine is this?* Not that Jesus taught any thing properly new, but there was a novelty and energy in his manner of teaching, to which they had not been accustomed.

Of all the disorders to which we are liable, there is none we know so little of, and in which medicine gives less certain relief, than insanity. In these cases, when, by any mode of treatment, men *do* recover the use of their senses, it is generally after a long time. But here this most wonderful of all effects was produced by speaking a word, an evident proof that the hand of God was in it.

31. This disorder has a regular period, and is not cured without coming to a crisis, so that a sudden cure, like this, immediately after which a person shall be able to go about his business, is evidently miraculous.

34. That is, the *demoniacs*.

35. Notwithstanding Jesus performed those extraordinary miracles, we see how he expressed his entire dependence upon God for all his powers, by prayer, as other pious persons do.

\* See on *Luke* v. 8, *supra*, pp. 66, 67.

† Not torn. "L'esprit lui ayant causé des mouvemens convulsifs." *Le Clerc*. "When the unclean spirit had thrown him into convulsions." N. T. 1729, l. p. 122. "Les versions ont mal traduit le mot Grec *σπασμός* dont les evangelistes se servent pour exprimer les convulsions que le demon causoit à ceux qu'il possédoit, lors qu'elles disent qu'il les dérompoit, ou qu'il les déchiroit, *Marc* i. 26, et ix. 26; *Luc* ix. 39, 42. Car comme *Heinsius*, *Grotius*, *Hammond* et *Lightfoot* le remarquent,—les *Septante* et *Symmaque* employent ce terme pour designer simplement ébranler, ou émouvoir.—Ce terme signifie souvent parmi les auteurs Grecs être en convulsion, comme *Grotius* l'a remarqué. Il faut donc traduire, *l'esprit impur les jettoit en convulsion* et non les dérompoit." *Le Cène*, pp. 569, 570. See *Pearce*, l. p. 211.

## SECTION XXI.

*The Sermon on the Mount. (Part I.)*

*Matt.* v. 1—26; *Mark* iv. 21, 22; ix. 49, 50; *Luke* vi. 20—26; viii. 16, 17; xi. 33; xii. 58, 59; xiv. 34, 35; xvi. 17.

HITHERTO it is only said that Jesus, like *John the Baptist*, called upon his hearers to *repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. Here we have a specimen of his excellent morality.

The great object of this discourse seems to have been to inculcate the principles of a better morality than was taught by the doctors of the Jewish law in that age, and also gradually to undermine some of their notions concerning the outward splendour of the Messiah's kingdom; for, in opposition to the pride and haughtiness which those notions could not fail to inspire, he begins his discourse with pronouncing blessings upon persons of a quite different temper and disposition, as the *poor in spirit*, the *humble*, the *mourners*, the *meek*, the *merciful*, &c. and especially the *persecuted for righteousness' sake*, of which they who expected a triumphant Messiah could have no apprehension.\*

We are probably to regard what we find in these three chapters [*Matt.* v.—vii.] not as delivered at once, but as the substance of what Jesus said upon various occasions. The want of connexion shews this. The evangelist has given no account of his general moral maxims but this, and he preached in various places in Galilee, and would probably often repeat the same thing. So in the tenth chapter we have an account of Christ's instruction to the twelve apostles with respect to their particular mission before his death; but into that discourse he brought every thing of a similar nature, even precepts which relate to their future mission into the world at large, which were probably not delivered at that time. This might be considered as more convenient for the reader, than to place similar observations in different parts.

*Matt.* v. 3.† No virtue is more frequently insisted upon by the sacred writers, and by our Lord in particular, than hu-

\* See these views illustrated by Wakefield, pp. 64, 65.

† See *Ladner*, II. pp. 348, 349; III. p. 537; IV. p. 221.



mility, which is no doubt the meaning of *poverty of spirit*; and pride is generally considered, especially by the Psalmist, as synonymous to vice in general. The former is that temper of mind which receives all the commandments of God with submission, and acquiesces with cheerfulness in all his dispensations; whereas a spirit of pride and haughtiness sets a man up as it were against God, leading him to despise all superior authority, and to affect something of self-sufficiency and independence. It is observed that not less than ten times in the course of the New Testament we meet with the sentiment expressed by our Saviour, *Matt. xxiii. 12*, viz. "Whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted."

4. This denotes the same general character with poverty of spirit. The poor in spirit will lament their own sins, and those of others, and be apprehensive of the Divine displeasure, which is their only dread.\*

5. This expression frequently occurs in the book of Psalms, in which long life and the inheritance of the earth are represented as the rewards of all virtue; and they may still express the happiness of a future state, which will probably be upon this *earth*, in some reformed and improved state of it after the resurrection.†

6. This is a very emphatical expression, intimating that the truly virtuous have the same ardent desire to excel in all virtue, that other men have to gratify their natural appetites for meat and drink; and that to do a wrong action would give them as much pain as hunger or thirst.‡

7. This is what Jesus frequently, and with peculiar emphasis, inculcates. It is even the subject of one of the petitions in the prayer which he gave his disciples, which teaches us to expect no mercy from God, but in proportion as we extend mercy to our offending and penitent brethren.

8. It appears to have been too much the custom with the Jewish moralists to inculcate a regard to external actions; but here, and in several other parts of his discourse, Jesus shews the importance of attending in the first place to the heart, from which all that is morally good or bad proceeds; the heart, or the affections, being the root of the tree, and our actions the branches and the fruit, which always derive their quality from it.§

9. || This is similar to the virtues before mentioned, of

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 27; *Wakefield*, p. 65; *Lardner*, III. p. 537.

† See *Hallett*, I. p. 201; *Wakefield*, p. 65.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 65, 66. See *Lardner*, II. p. 349; III. p. 537; *Bowyer*, p. 4.

§ See *Wakefield*, pp. 66, 67.

|| Or, sons of God. See *ibid.* p. 67.

humility, meekness and mercifulness. They who are of this disposition will always be disposed to be at peace with all the world, and will rejoice in every opportunity of promoting peace and good-will among others.

11, 12.\* This language must have greatly surprised those followers of Jesus who had any expectation of his being the Messiah; for they little looked for a state of persecution, and could therefore see no occasion for such an exhortation as this. But nothing could have been better calculated to prepare men for that state which would best qualify them for the happiness of Christians in a future world, viz. a state of severe trial and discipline in this world, in which it would often be necessary to abandon life, and all the enjoyments of it, in order to secure an interest in the happiness of heaven, of which Jesus more distinctly apprized his followers afterwards.

13. *If the salt have lost its savour.* It is a common thing for rock salt, when exposed to the air in hot countries, to lose its acid. Maundrell says, "Along on one side of the valley of salt, viz. that towards *Gibul*, there is a small precipice, about two men's lengths, occasioned by the continual taking away the salt. I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savour. The inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained its savour, as I found by proof."†

14.‡ *A city set on a hill.* Perhaps the town of Saphet, or Bethulia, which stood upon a hill, might be in view.§

16. These two exhortations are immediately addressed to his professed disciples, and especially those who propagated the gospel. Of these he says, *Ye are the salt of the earth*, and *the light of the world*, and therefore of no use if they do not act up to their proper character, so as to be of use to others. Similar to this, in the ancient prophets, is the comparison of Israel to a vine, which, if fruitless, is of no value at all, the quantity and quality of its wood being both insignificant. And certainly nothing can be more contemptible than the character of those who profess to teach Chris-

\* See Wakefield, p. 68.

† Benson's *Life of Christ*, p. 391. (P.) Maundrell, 1740, Ed. 6, pp. 161, 162. See Pearce, p. 28; Wakefield, pp. 68, 69.

‡ "Ye are the light of the world, pointing probably at the same time to the sun. And here the comparison finishes. The remainder of this verse and the next, are comparisons introductory to ver. 16. Dr. Clarke, in his *Sermons*, first pointed this out." *Ibid.* p. 69.

§ Maundrell, p. 115.



tianity to others, and disgrace it by their own conduct. Such men as Jesus intimates by his next comparison, stand in a conspicuous situation, where their conduct will be observed, and cannot be without a good or bad effect; so that they ought to be more particularly circumspect.

By the comparison of Christian ministers to *the light of the world*, Jesus reproves those who are qualified to be useful to others, and yet do not exert themselves for that purpose. No man should *live to himself*, but least of all those who, by their education and profession, make it their business to instruct others. They should consider themselves as devoted to God, and to the cause of truth and virtue, and not hold themselves excused if they do not, by every method in their power, enlighten the minds and improve the hearts of all to whom they have access. When men are incapacitated for public usefulness, the obligation, no doubt, ceases. Then, as *Milton* finely says, *They also serve who only stand and wait*; being ready to be sent upon any business of their master, whenever they are called upon.

17,\* 18. It does not appear that our Lord had as yet done any thing that can be interpreted as an instance of disregard to the laws of Moses, or an intention to abolish them. But his invectives against the teachers of the law, and the liberties he took with the *Sabbath* afterwards, made it suspected. Indeed, the cures at *Capernaum* were upon the Sabbath day; but it does not appear that this then gave any offence. It was sometime afterwards that the more zealous doctors of Jerusalem made a handle of this. The common people do not appear to have been offended at it. Our Lord, however, might choose to advance what he says concerning the law, previous to what he was about to say with respect to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were the great teachers of it. As the Jews expected that the Messiah would be a great prophet as well as a king, such as David had been, they must naturally expect that he would teach them something, as well as deliver them from their enemies, and therefore might wish to know how far his commission in this respect extended. Jesus must know that many suspected he was the Messiah, and though he did not acknowledge, he did not contradict it. But whatever his specific character was, he distinctly and frequently informed his hearers of the great object of his mission, and here he says, "I am not come to destroy the law or the

\* See *Mede*, p. 12; *Wakefield*, pp. 73, 74; Vol. XII. p. 457.

prophets, but to fulfil them," i. e. completely to conform to them, and enforce their obligation. This he did by his own conduct, and the apostles did so after his death; attending the Temple service, and doing every thing else that other religious Jews held themselves obliged to do, though they did not enjoin the same observances on their Gentile converts. The only objection that has been made to the opinion of the laws of Moses being perpetually obligatory on the Jews, though they should embrace Christianity, has been occasioned by what was advanced by Paul in some of his epistles, and these will be considered in their proper place.

*One tittle.* Probably those small strokes which made the distinction between letters nearly alike.\*

19.† It appears that the Jewish teachers made great account of their distinction of the precepts of the law into *greater* and *less*, those of the *first and second importance*, &c. Here Jesus says every thing that God enjoins us is of importance, and that all infringement of the smallest article will affect a man's rank in the kingdom of heaven; whereas the conscientious observance of the smallest, when the rest are not neglected, gives high rank in it.‡

20. Hence it is highly probable that *the Scribes and Pharisees* taught that the observance of some precepts would atone for the neglect of others; otherwise what Jesus says would be no reason for what he advanced about observing all commands without distinction. The same may be inferred from what *James* said, [ii. 10,] "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." Jesus now proceeds to particular instances of the imperfection of the morality of the Scribes and Pharisees.§

21, 22. || *In danger of the judgment.* *Judgment* and *council* probably refer to different courts of judicature among the Jews.

*Hell fire.* The word *γέεννα* signifies the valley of the son of Hinnom, which was a valley near Jerusalem, infamous for idolatry, and particularly for the burning of infants

\* See *Wakefield*, p. 74. "Il faut necessairement reconnoître de l'hyperbole dans ce que Jesus dit.—Car il est constant que la negligence des copistes a fait disparoître plusieurs lettres et des mots entiers de l'Ancien Testament." *Le Cene*, pp. 36, 37.

† *One of the least of these commandment.* See *Bowyer*, pp. 4, 5. "I think that the word *these* relates to the commandments which Jesus was then going to give them in *vers.* 22, &c. because mention is made in *ver.* 20 of the kingdom of heaven, i. e. the gospel." *Pearce*, I. p. 29.

‡ See *Wakefield*, pp. 74, 75.

§ See *Jos. Antiq.* B. xviii. Ch. i. Sect. iii.; *Pearce*, I. p. 29; *Matt.* xv. 1—7; *Wakefield*, pp. 75, 219—222.

|| See *Le Cene*, pp. 517, 518; *Essay*, 1727, p. 9.



to *Moloch*, fires being continually kept there for that and other purposes. After the reign of *Josiah*, the filth of the city was generally consumed there. By the name of this horrid place the Jews, in our Saviour's time, represented the punishment of the wicked in another life, and he adopted it after them.\*

As *raka*, in the former part of the verse, is a Hebrew or Syriac word, it is probable that the word *μωρε* is one too, and then it will signify *rebel* or *apostate*, which is a more bitter and insulting expression than *fool*. *Raka* means an empty, good-for-nothing fellow.

Probably the Jews thought that only greater offences, such as they thought worthy of being punished by courts of justice, the lesser of which they called *the judgment*, and the greater, *the council*, were offensive to God. But Jesus makes the smallest offence in the eye of God to be equal to those which they thought deserving the highest censure. Observe, it is not particular expressions that we are to attend to, so much as the general spirit and design of what our Lord says. The purport of what he says here is, that offences which men often overlook, as of little consequence, are frequently, in reality, of great; being either in themselves highly criminal, or leading to what is so.

24. This is not to be understood quite literally, but considered as an emphatic manner of expressing the great importance of moral duties, especially those of a social kind.

25,† 26. This seems to be a precept of prudence, but shews in general the danger of neglecting whatever ought to be done, and how much evil a little attention may prevent.

*Mark ix. 49. Salted for the fire.* Thus *πυρι* may be rendered; i. e. every person shall be prepared for being a sacrifice to God by you the apostles and disciples: so 2 *Peter iii. 7*, *πυρι τηγουμενοι*, is, *reserved for fire*.‡ *Pearce* thinks the clause to be an interpolation.§ There is an ambiguity in the Hebrew and Syriac word which Jesus probably used, as it signifies either to be consumed or to be salted.

50. *Have salt in yourselves*, that is, Have the true spirit of the gospel among yourselves, and give proof of it by living in peace one with another, of which, partaking of the same salt is an emblem.||

\* See *Lightfoot's Works*, H. p. 141. (P.) See *Pearce*, I. pp. 30, 31; *Wakefield*, pp. 75, 76.

† On vers. 23—25, see *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 3, 4.

‡ Benson's *Life of Christ*, p. 711. (P.)

§ *Com.* I. p. 253. See *Bowyer*, p. 24.

|| *Benson*, p. 712. (P.)

## PARAPHRASE.

*Matt. v. (22.)* Your ordinary tribunals in this world punish murder only with death ; but I say unto you that, in a future world, causeless rage and hatred will be punished by God, who knows the heart, in a manner as dreadful. If the hatred proceed to abusive words, so that a man shall call his brother *a vain, empty fellow*, his punishment will be as much greater, as that which is inflicted by the Sanhedrim for the most atrocious crimes exceeds the punishments that are inflicted by the inferior courts of justice ; but if a man proceeds farther to call his brother *a wicked, abandoned wretch*, which reflects upon his moral character as well as his understanding, and all without reason, his punishment in a future life will be so great, that it may be compared to burning in the valley of Hinnom, which is more dreadful than any punishment that the highest of your judicatures ever inflict.\*

## SECTION XXII.

*The Sermon on the Mount. (Part II.)*

*Matt. v. 27—48 ; Luke vi. 27—36.*

IN this part of the discourse, Jesus continues to inculcate the same maxims of strict morality which he had laid down in the former, giving more instances of the stress that ought to be laid on purity of heart, as well as on freedom from blame in the outward actions.

*Matt. v. 28.* As we ought not to indulge unreasonable anger, which leads to murder, so neither ought we to indulge passions which lead to the violation of any other of God's commands. For if the design of committing any action be actually formed, and nothing but opportunity be wanting to putting it in practice,† it is the same thing, in the sight of God, who sees and judges by the heart, as if it had been done. Hence, no doubt, persons will be rewarded for virtuous actions which they never performed, if it was their desire and determination to perform them, as others will be punished for vices which they never actually committed.

But in this case it is not the mere thought of any crime, or the mere desire of criminal gratification, such as would

\* See *Grotius. (P.)*

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 32 ; and on *Ch. xv. 19*, p. 105 ; *Wakefield*, pp. 77, 78.



not carry a man to the actual doing of wrong, that are here censured; for such mere thoughts and desires are often unavoidable, and should be considered as temptations which there is virtue in resisting. But the voluntary indulgence of such thoughts and desires is in itself considerably criminal, as they may lead to that state of mind which would carry a man to outward action. They ought, therefore, to be resisted with the greatest care.

29. *Offend*, i. e. *ensnare, cause to sin*. This is generally the meaning of the word *σκανδαλίζω* in the New Testament.\*

*Thy whole body be cast into hell*. It is plain that our Lord alludes to the resurrection, as the time of future punishment, without giving any hint of an *intermediate state*, or the punishment of the separate soul, concerning which nothing is ever said in the Scriptures.

30. It is evident that through almost the whole of this discourse, Jesus expressed himself in a parabolical and figurative manner, and did not intend to be understood literally. What he says of *cutting off a right hand*, and *plucking out a right eye*, which are members of the greatest value to us, if they cannot be retained without incurring guilt, expresses in the strongest manner that every thing is to be sacrificed to our integrity.

31. *Whosoever shall put away his wife*. The Jewish doctors allowed great licence in this respect. *R. Akiba* said, that if any man saw a woman handsomer than his own wife, he might put her away, because it is said in the law, *If she find not favour in his eyes*.†

32. Frequency of divorce has always been considered as a symptom of great depravity of manners. It was so at Rome in the time of *Augustus*, and with the Jews in the time of our Saviour and that of *Josephus*. It was highly necessary, therefore, in order to enforce the obligation of marriage, to restrict the power of divorce within the narrowest bounds. Adultery in either party being a breach of the law of marriage, will no doubt authorize a divorce, in the sight of God, because after an offence of this nature there cannot be any prospect of domestic happiness, nor any certainty with respect to the common offspring. So great is the evil arising from this crime, that in most countries it is punishable with death, and justly so, though for obvious

\* See *Wakefield*, p. 78.

† *Lightfoot's Works*, II. p. 147. (P.) See "the form used on these occasions, taken from *Lightfoot*," in *Wakefield*, p. 79.

reasons it has always been deemed a greater crime in the wife than in the husband.

34—37. Not oaths in a court of judicature, but only in conversation. This is evident from the nature of them. It never was the custom in any court to swear *by heaven* or *by earth*, &c. Besides, Jesus himself answered upon oath, according to the Jewish mode of administering it, when he was tried before the high-priest, who adjured him by the living God (*Matt. xxvi. 63*).<sup>\*</sup> But the Jews had made many nice distinctions in oaths, the absurdity of which Jesus exposes, and observes that oaths in conversation are profane, as an infringement of that reverence which is due to God, and therefore ought to be avoided, and the greatest simplicity of discourse adhered to.

39. *Resist not evil.* That this is not to be understood literally, is evident from the conduct of our Saviour and Paul, who, when they were actually smitten, did not voluntarily expose themselves to farther insults, but expostulated on account of those they had received. The precept can, therefore, only be intended to inculcate a meek and unrevenged temper.<sup>†</sup>

42. In all these cases it is not the specific action that is obligatory upon us; for that would lead to no good, and often to much harm, but the temper of mind which in its excess might lead to such conduct as this, as giving to all who should ask, and lending to all who would borrow.

43. These words are not found in the Old Testament, and therefore *Pearce* ‡ conjectures that *Matthew* wrote, *and not hate thine enemy*, referring to *Lev. xix. 17, 18*: this is generally the sense of the law of Moses, respecting strangers and enemies; and our Saviour's alteration from *not hating*, to *loving*, is considerable. The aversion which the Jews entertained for all who were not of their own nation, or religion, is well known; but though they pretended to justify this by some passage in their law, their constructions were unfair and injurious.

44—46. § Though we are here required to love all without distinction, we are not required to forgive all that offend, unless they repent: *Luke xvii. 3, If he repent, forgive him.* But we are to love or wish well to all, whether they repent or not; i. e. we must not bear them any ill-will, but, from a

\* See *Bowyer*, p. 5; *Pearce*, I. p. 34; *Wakefield*, pp. 79, 80.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 35; *Wakefield*, pp. 83, 84.

‡ *Com. I. p. 36.* See *Wakefield*, pp. 85, 86.

§ See *Wakefield*, pp. 86, 87.



sincere desire to do them good, endeavour to bring them to repentance, that we may forgive them, and behave to them as if they had never offended.

48. \* There is great wisdom and sublimity in this precept, not to propose to ourselves any standard short of absolute perfection. If we did, such is the vanity and self-conceit of many, that they would soon imagine that they had attained it. A man who really aims at perfection of character and conduct, will always see something to improve, even where those who are best acquainted with him cannot see any fault at all. When any man pretends to perfection, it is a sure sign that he is far short of it.

*Luke vi. 35. Hoping for nothing again.* Pearce† would render the passage, *making nobody despair,‡ or putting nobody out of hopes*, i. e. refusing nobody: preferring the reading of *μηδεν* to that of *μεδεν*. According to our present reading, it may be rendered, *despairing of nothing.*§

### PARAPHRASE.

(*Matt. v. (38—44.)*) Moses, to deter people from injuring one another, allowed men to exact by law *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*, &c. And the Jewish doctors not only encourage men to insist upon this, but even allow men to revenge their own quarrels in this manner, provided they do not inflict a greater injury than they had received. But I command you to check the spirit of revenge, and resent no injury done to yourselves, without the most urgent necessity, or for the public good. (48.) Also, in opposition to the covetous, and consequently the litigious spirit of the Pharisees, I would advise you to suffer as far as possible, and by any means compose your differences in an amicable manner, rather than go to law with one another.

### SECTION XXIII.

#### *The Sermon on the Mount. (Part III.)*

*Matt. vi. 1—33; Luke xi. 1—4; 34—36; xii. 22—34;  
Luke xvi. 13.*

I HAVE observed that the great object of this discourse is to inculcate the superior importance of attending to the

\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 87—89.

† *Com. I. p. 340.*

‡ See *Le Cene*, pp. 643, 644; *Bowyer*, p. 39.

§ "Giving up nothing for lost." *Wakefield*.

heart, and to God who sees the heart; and that the religion which appears to others, is only the fruit, or the effect of it, and therefore of secondary consideration. This is urged in this part of the discourse with as much force as in any other.

*Matt.* vi. 1. Our Saviour, in the beginning of this Section, alludes to a variety of customs among the Pharisees, who performed their devotions in a very ostentatious manner.

Upon another occasion, our Lord is far from disapproving a decent appearance of religion. On the contrary, he says, (*Matt.* v. 16,) *Let your light shine before men.* Without this there could be no such thing as good example. But applause should not be our object. In this verse, according to the most approved readings, he speaks first of *righteousness*\* in general, and then of *alms-giving* in particular.

2. *Sound a trumpet.*† In the East, some dervises carry horns with them, which they blow when any thing is given them. Perhaps some of the Jewish beggars might have the same custom, and the Pharisees might give alms to them, in preference to others.‡

3. *Let not thy left hand know, &c.* It is said that the poor's chest stood on the right hand as they entered the synagogues.§

4. ¶ In many cases it is impossible to observe *secrecy*, even in alms-giving; but certainly much good may be done without the giver being known to any, even to the person who receives the benefit. The proper rule, no doubt, is to give alms, or do any good action, so as, all circumstances considered, to do the most good, both to the object and to others, in exciting a spirit of benevolence.

5. ¶ Such ostentatious prayers hardly appear credible to us; but in the East, and other countries, nothing is more common. Their religion appears in their common discourse; and when the hour of prayer is come, many persons will fall upon their knees wherever they are, even in the streets. In Roman Catholic countries it is the custom to pray before images in the highways, and in places of the greatest con-

\* "Which," Gregory says, "is the word for almes in the Oriental phrase." *Notes*, 1650, p. 59. See *Mede* (*Disc.* xxii.), p. 80; *Pearce*, p. 38; *Wakefield*, p. 91.

† It has been proposed to translate the close of this verse, and of *vers.* 5, 16, *They hinder their reward.* See *Le Cene*, pp. 520—523; *Essay*, 1727, p. 241. Yet see *Pearce*, l. pp. 38, 39; *Wakefield*, p. 91.

‡ *Harmer*, l. p. 474. (*P.*) *Chardin MS.*

§ "How much of the excellence and significancy of Scripture language is lost to us from our ignorance of the practices of the Jews!" *Wakefield* (on this verse), p. 92.

¶ See *Wakefield*, p. 92.

¶ See *ibid.* pp. 92, 93.



course, as I have seen myself. Where it is the general custom, even *this* may be done without affectation. It would be well if we were not so far gone into the other extreme. When persons who are really pious never discover that they are so, neither in discourse, nor any particular customs, even in their own families, others who pretend to no religion will naturally class them with themselves, and the benefit of their example be lost. This extreme, however, is better than the other, which carries the appearance of hypocrisy, and makes religion disgusting.

6. *Pray in secret to thy Father.* This makes a better sense, and is of sufficient authority.\*

7. *Vain repetitions.* This may refer to the repeated invocations which are customary in prayers to the Heathen gods, in which all their known names and attributes are superstitiously enumerated, as well as to the clamorous, indecent manner of urging their requests. See the account of the behaviour of the priests of *Baal* in their contest with *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* xvi. 26.

*As the Heathen do.* Dr. Wotton, as *Pearce*† observes, thinks that the original reading was *hypocrites*, and not *Heathens*.‡ He also thinks that βαττολογία in this verse signifies *long speeches*, and not properly *vain repetitions*, though these are the consequence of long speeches.§

8. There is much difficulty in the phrase *use not vain repetitions*. But this verse may serve to explain it. If the avoiding these repetitions is to pray in such a manner as to take it for granted that God knows our wants before we mention them, these repetitions must be something in the conduct of the Heathens which discovered that they thought differently of the objects of their worship, and particularly that they hoped by clamorous importunity to obtain what they otherwise would not be disposed to grant. We may observe, therefore, that the very title by which our Lord directs us to address God is such as, of itself, implies his disposition to give us whatever is good for us, namely, *our Father*; as the next clause, *who art in heaven*, may imply that he sees and knows all things.¶

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 39. (P.) See *Wakefield*, p. 93.

† *Com.* I. p. 40.

‡ See Wotton's *Discourses*, I. p. 187.

§ See *Wakefield*, pp. 94, 95. Mr. T. F. Palmer understands by *battology* "the enumerating several particulars concerning our worldly wants." See his paper signed *Anglo-Scotus*, in *Theol. Repos.* VI. pp. 178—185.

¶ *Knoweth*; "and therefore does not require a very *prolix* and *minute* account of your necessities. He will accept your prayer as an expression of *gratitude* and *duty*, not as a mean of *information* to himself." *Wakefield*, p. 95.

9. \* It is evident, from these words, that Jesus did not mean to prescribe a particular form, to be used just as he delivered it,† though there is no impropriety in making use of it, as it contains the substance of all our prayer; but rather to shew in what manner we should pray, what things we should make the subjects of our prayer, the temper of mind with which we should pray, both respecting God and man, and especially the confidence we ought to express in the power, wisdom and goodness of God, and our entire submission to his will.

11. ‡ The expression in the original properly means *bread for the following day*, and is probably an allusion to the custom of distributing to domestics of a family, in the evening, provision necessary for the following day.§ It teaches us we should not distress our minds with anxious thoughts about things at a great distance, but content ourselves with asking of God such things as we immediately want, and those *necessaries* only, which are signified by the term *bread*, without which we could not subsist.

13. This conclusion of the prayer is not in *Luke* [xi. 4], and as it is not quoted by any ancient writer, it is by many persons thought to be an interpolation.|| But the expression, no doubt, is very proper, and suits very well with what precedes.

15. It is evident, from this remark of Jesus, that one of his principal objects in delivering this form was to inculcate the temper proper for prayer, and especially towards our offending brethren, those who stand in the same relation to us that we stand in to God. Whatever we wish and pray he would do for us, we should do for them.

16. Our Lord continues to urge the importance of *sincerity*, in opposition to the *hypocrisy* of the Scribes and Pharisees.¶ Their object was to gain the favour of men, whereas a truly devout person respects God, and what is right in itself, without regard to consequences.

17. This was customary with the Jews, both at feasts and at other times.\*\*

\* See Wakefield, p. 95. (P.)

† See Mede (Disc. i.), p. 1.

‡ See *Le Cène*, pp. 774, 775; *Improved Version*, p. 12; Mede (Disc. xxviii.), p. 125; Wakefield, pp. 95, 96.

§ See Harmer, III. pp. 227—230.

|| See Gregory, pp. 165—170; N. T. 1729, p. 539, Note; *Improved Version*, p. 12.

¶ See Wakefield, pp. 96, 97.

\*\* To anoint, "i. e. with oil," was "a common practice, not only among the Jews, but with the Greeks and Romans, especially when they sat down to an entertainment; frequently mentioned in the O. T., and in almost every page of classic authors." *Ibid.* p. 97.



18. This is not to be observed with too much rigour, any more than other precepts contained in this discourse. To exhibit the appearance of festivity, as is the anointing the head, in the East, on a day of professed fasting, would be unnatural and offensive. But it requires that we should consult outward appearances no farther than decency requires, that nothing of this kind may particularly attract the attention of others, but take care that the sentiments of our hearts are fit for the Divine inspection.\*

19. *Treasures*; i. e. your chief treasures, those which you most value, and labour most to attain.†

*Moth and rust.* Rust respects metals, and moth, clothes, which makes a great part of valuable treasure in Eastern countries,‡ where their loose garments will fit almost any person.

21. Besides that these precepts ought not to be understood literally, the most obvious sense of our Lord's words to *us* is very different from what it would be to a Jew: for by this mode of expression he would only understand them to mean that the laying up a treasure in heaven is of infinitely more moment than any treasure on earth. This was explained before. This precept, if properly understood, is of great consequence to all Christians, and what in time of peace and prosperity they are very apt to lose sight of. The world has too many charms for us, and in the pursuit of earthly things we are apt to forget our interest in heaven; so that when persecution arises, we have no sentiments or resolutions proper for the occasion. We might then be found to love the world too much, and for the sake of it make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

22. *If thine eye be single*; rather, *clear*, being opposed to an eye that has a film over it. Eye here means the moral principle, or conscience, which, if it be sound, is the safe guide of life, as a lamp is to a man in walking.§ But if it be vitiated, a man is left without resource, being deserted by all that within him which he could depend upon for direction.

\* "It is observable, that neither Jesus nor his apostles *enjoin* fasting, though they give directions for a proper observance of this duty. They chose, I presume, to leave their disciples a discretionary power, of regarding or not, as they should think proper, a *ceremonial* which savours more of *Jewish* severity and *Pharisaical* ostentation, than of the purity of a *spiritual* religion." Wakefield, p. 97.

† "Treasures in heaven, rather than treasures on earth; have more care to lay up the one than the other." Mede, p. 352.

‡ See James v. 2, §; Pearce, I. p. 43; Wakefield, pp. 99, 100.

§ See Pearce, I. p. 43; Wakefield, p. 100.

24. *Mammon*; a Syriac word for *riches*.\*

25. The word that is here rendered *life* is the same that is sometimes rendered *soul*,† which shews how cautious we should be in drawing consequences from particular words and phrases in the Scriptures; for it might have been rendered, *Take no thought for your soul*. But, in the Scriptures, the soul of man is no other than *the principle of life*, or a living man, in opposition to one that is dead, and never means a principle that can subsist in a state of action and enjoyment when the body is dead. This is a doctrine altogether unknown to the writers both of the Old and New Testament, and was borrowed from the Heathen philosophy.

27. *Unto his age*.‡ Respecting the prolongation of life.

30. *To-morrow is cast into the oven*. The stalks of herbs and flowers are used in the East for firing; fuel being, in many places, very scarce.§

30, 31. ¶ This language, interpreted literally from the Greek, means only *anxious care*, such as tends to distress, without doing any good. We should make it our first care to do right, and to please God, considering him as our Sovereign, and ourselves as his servants, which is intimated by our seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness. We should pursue every thing else with a secondary concern; assuring ourselves, that if we make ourselves acceptable to God, he will not suffer us to want any good thing. Possibly our Lord's advice might particularly respect the apostles, and be more literally applicable to them, and the first ministers of the gospel, who devoted themselves wholly to the preaching of it, without any other means of support. But even in this case we see that Paul had recourse to his trade of tent-making, and did not neglect a prudent care of himself.

33, 34. ¶ All these precepts are admirably calculated to promote our Lord's great design, namely, to lead men's views to another life, which had not been the case even with Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament. Though I have no doubt they were believers in the doctrine of a future life,\*\*

\* "Riches personified in the Eastern manner. We may suppose *Mammon* to be a real being with as much reason as we suppose the *Devil* or *Satan* to be such." Wakefield, p. 101. See *Le Cene*, p. 5; *Newcome*, in *Improved Version*, p. 13.

† See *Pilkington*, p. 94; *Wakefield*, p. 101.

‡ *Pearce*, l. p. 45. See *Wakefield*, pp. 101, 102.

§ *To-morrow* may mean, in a very short time. See *Harmer*, l. p. 264. (P.) *Pearce*, l. p. 45; *Wakefield*, p. 103.

¶ See *ibid.* p. 103.

¶ See *ibid.* pp. 103, 104.

\*\* See Vol. XII. pp. 482—504.



yet it does not appear from their writings that they gave much attention to it, but dwelt more on the promises of God in this world. The great object of Christ's mission was *to bring life and immortality to light*, and therefore his moral precepts chiefly relate to a more glorious state; and this circumstance gives a dignity and importance to the precepts of morality, which they never had before.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matt. vi. (9, &c.)* O God, our heavenly Father, the author of our being, who knowest all our wants, and whose care and goodness we daily experience; it is our earnest wish and prayer, that thy being, attributes and providence may be universally known and revered, and that the pure worship of thee may prevail over the whole world! May thy kingdom under the Messiah, a kingdom of truth and righteousness, be firmly established; that thy will may be done by all men, with the utmost cheerfulness and readiness, as it is done by the angels in heaven. Grant unto us as much of the good things of this life as may be sufficient for our present use; but for this and all our future supplies we cheerfully rely on thy infinite wisdom and goodness. Forgive, we beseech thee, our offences against thee, as we from our hearts forgive those who offend us. Bring us into no trials or temptations that shall be too hard for us; but may all the discipline of life be such as shall exercise and improve us, and be a means of delivering us from all vice, and establishing us in the practice of virtue. These our requests we address unto thee, as the Supreme and Perpetual Governor of the Universe, who canst do more for us than we can ask.

(22.) See that you form a right judgment of the respective value of things, temporal and eternal: for the judgment or reason is to the mind what the eye is to the body, which guides all its motions. If the eye be clear, the whole body enjoys the benefit of it; but if it be cloudy, the injury extends to the whole body. If, therefore, the eye of the mind, the seat of knowledge and judgment, be perverted, whence can it possibly be enlightened and directed? In what darkness, confusion and misery must the man be involved!

(24.) What you chiefly value and pursue must be *one thing*. Least of all is it possible that any person should successfully give his attention to things so very different in their nature as those of *this life*, and those of *the life to come*. You must, therefore, give a decided preference to one of them, and make the other subservient to it. This will necessarily

be the case, if a man engage in the service of two masters, whose commands must sometimes interfere. You cannot, therefore, be devoted to the service of God and the pursuit of this world at the same time.

## SECTION XXIV.

### *The Sermon on the Mount. (Part IV.)*

*Matt.* vii. 1—29; *Mark* iv. 23, 24; *Luke* vi. 31, 37—49; xi. 5—13; xiii. 23—30.

THIS discourse is not confined to one subject, but takes in the whole compass of moral duty, those that relate to our fellow-creatures, as well as those which respect God, and others that relate to the government of ourselves in general, and a care to cultivate universal virtue; and I cannot repeat it too often, that none of the expressions are to be interpreted too literally. But their effect upon the mind is greater than that of any literal expression. By his figurative manner of speaking, Christ shews in the clearest manner what *dispositions* we should cultivate, and this disposition once impressed leads to all right conduct, without particular directions.

*Matt.* vii. 2.\* If you expect to be treated with candour yourselves, shew it to others.

3. *A mote.* Some suppose it to be a small splinter of wood,† which is more directly opposed to a *beam*. There are others who suppose that these terms denote different disorders of the eye.

5. This teaches us that we should be more attentive to our own faults, than to those of other persons. We are too ready to make excuses for ourselves, and to make too little allowance for others; to overlook great faults in ourselves, and to discover small ones in them.‡

6.§ The object of this instruction is to do good; but

\* "With that measure with which a man measures, men will measure to him. This was a Jewish proverb, mentioned by *Maimonides* (*Mor. Nev.* iii. 17)." *Wakefield*, p. 106.

† Or "a straw, or chaff, but the propriety of the comparison requires some word analogous to a beam." *Ibid.* p. 107.

‡ "In the *Talmud* are the following proverbs: 'They who say to others, *take the small piece of wood out of thy teeth*, are answered by, *take the beam out of thine eyes* (*Hammond and Lightfoot*)." *Ibid.*

§ On a supposed "transposition of terms in this verse, see *Heinsius* in *Le Cens*, p. 553; *Essay*, 1727, p. 60; *Bowyer*, pp. 5, 6; *Wakefield*, p. 108. "The proverb of casting pearls before swine, was common among the Jews. (See *Maimon. Mor. Nev.* i. 71.)" *Ibid.* p. 109.



where the prejudices of mankind will not suffer reason to be heard, to offer it, rather exasperates them, and brings mischief on ourselves, than does good. There are too many persons in this unfavourable state of mind. Jesus perceived it more than once, and acted upon his own maxim. Thus, he does not seem to have attempted the reformation of the Scribes and Pharisees, contenting himself with exposing their vices, and holding them out as a warning to others. We often see persons deaf to the plainest reasons, retaining the most absurd opinions, or persisting in the most unreasonable practices, notwithstanding all that can be said by way of remonstrance. We should all be careful to avoid ourselves what we see amiss in others.

7.\* These precepts and advices, being delivered with great conciseness, are not to be understood without those limitations that we elsewhere find in Scripture, as, that *the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, &c.*

11. We are here supposed to pray with a proper temper of mind, and without that clamorous importunity which Jesus censures in this very discourse; but he shews how well disposed God is to bless all who with a proper temper of mind, and in a proper manner, apply to him for his blessing. He has a stronger affection for us than any earthly parent has for his offspring; being in a higher and more proper sense *our parent*, or *the Author of our being*. If our prayers are not heard, the cause is not in God, but in ourselves.

12.† This is with propriety called *the golden rule* of the gospel; not that it is peculiar to the gospel, for the sentiment occurs in other writings, but for its general excellence, and easy application to practice. If we will pause and think, nothing is easier than to put ourselves in the place of another, and consider how we should feel, and what we should reasonably expect in their place. Those who have had recourse to this method must have often found how quickly things will appear in a quite different light in consequence of it. This rule is good not only in the case of charity, but of every social duty; so that it is properly said to comprise the substance of all the moral instruction in the law and the

\* On vers. 7, 8, see Hallett, I. pp. 11, 12. They "seem chiefly to relate to Jesus's disciples in those days." Pearce, I. p. 47. See Wakefield, p. 109.

† See Tobit iv. 15; Pearce, I. p. 48; Wakefield, pp. 110, 111. "This verse ill agrees with the context; and if compared with Luke vi. 30, 31, should be placed after Chap. v. 42." Bowyer, p. 6.

prophets. We shall violate no precept if we habitually recur to it.

15, 16.\* By *false prophets* our Lord probably meant the same persons whom he called by that name, and by that of *false Christs*, in the discourse relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, [*Chap.* xxiv. 24,] persons who would pretend to come from God, and impose upon men. But you may know them by their fruits, by their ambitious and selfish views. No good man can lay a false claim to a divine mission. On other occasions our Lord observes that men's doctrine may be regarded, when their practices should be avoided; as when he says, (*Matt.* xxiii. 2, 3,) "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's chair. What they teach, that observe and do; but do not according to their works, for they say and do not."

19. This verse is the same with *Chap.* iii. 10, and rather interrupts the reasoning.†

23.‡ From this, and from all our Lord's preaching, we see the great end of the gospel is a good life. We should attend to this the more, because the necessary consequence of overvaluing some things, is undervaluing others. So men lay a stress upon *faith* to the injury of duties. We see that persons who lay great stress on right opinions, or superstitious practices, are very apt to think themselves in favour with God, notwithstanding many neglects of what they know to be moral duty. Notwithstanding the Scriptures abound with cautions on this head, we see the bulk of mankind are full of zeal for what they account *orthodox faith*, and as full of bigotry and malice against others who differ from them. Thus they *strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*.

25. In the Holy Land rain is apt to fall in great torrents, so as to sweep the rocky hills that are but slightly covered with soil.§

27. The connexion of this fine comparison with the former part of the discourse, shews that what our Lord meant by *a good foundation*, was *good works*. This is all that is essential to Christianity. Other things may be right, and require our attention as such; but good morals are the foundation of all, and without these nothing will be of any avail at the last day.

\* See Wakefield, pp. 111, 112.

† Markland. (P.) Pearce, I. p. 49.

‡ See Wakefield, p. 113.

§ See Maundrell, pp. 57, 65; Harmer, I. pp. 31—33. "It is so in other countries in the neighbourhood of the tropics." Wakefield, p. 114.



29. He spoke as the messenger of God, with the dignity and energy of the ancient prophets, not as a mere interpreter of the sayings of others, like the Scribes and Pharisees. There must, therefore, have been something in the manner in which Jesus delivered himself, that would impress his hearers with veneration and esteem, and contribute not a little to the effect of his excellent instructions.\*

*Luke vi. 38. Into your lap.* The usual dress in the East is a piece of cloth, about six yards long and five or six feet broad, one corner of which is thrown over one shoulder, and the rest is folded about their bodies, the outer fold hanging loose, and serving for an apron, which is often rendered *lap*, or *bosom*, in the Scriptures. This garment being very apt to get loose, a girdle was very necessary to accompany it.†

xi. 5. This and other parables of our Lord, which recommend importunity in prayer, must not be interpreted so as to contradict his own directions, not to use *vain repetitions* in prayer, as if we expected to be heard for our much speaking; but as recommending an humble and patient expectation of the blessings we solicit, notwithstanding the Divine Being should think proper for a long time to withhold them.‡

*At midnight.* It is common in the East to travel by night, on account of the heat in the day.§

7. It is customary for a whole family to sleep in the same room, but not in the same bed; so that sleeping in the same room was probably all that was meant by *being with him in bed*, and even thus he must have disturbed them by rising and opening the door.|| Perhaps it may be rendered, My servants as well as myself are in bed; since *παιδιον*, as well as *παις*, may signify a servant.

12. *A scorpion.*¶ The body of a white scorpion is said to resemble an egg.\*\*

13. *That which is good.* Pearce†† prefers this reading to that which has *the Holy Spirit*.

xiii. 23. (*Matt. vii. 13, §§ Are there few that shall be saved?*) There is but too much reason to conclude that the bulk of mankind, in all ages, fall far short of that purity of

\* See Wakefield, p. 116.

† Shaw's Travels, p. 225. (P.)

‡ See Pearce, pp. 369, 370.

§ See Harmer, I. p. 468; III. p. 241.

|| See Chardin MS., Harmer, I. p. 165; Pearce, I. p. 370.

¶ "A friend of Dan Heinsius reads *σκορπίς*, would he give him *that* of a scorpion?" Bowyer, p. 41.

\*\* Bochart in Pearce, I. p. 371.

†† Com. I. p. 371.

§§ See Pearce, I. p. 48; Wakefield, p. 111.

heart and life which is required of Christians, and which is necessary to fit them for future happiness. Secular pursuits are evidently the great objects with the bulk of mankind, and a supreme regard to the will of God, and a future life, are comparatively rare.\*

24. *Will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*, i. e. they will apply too late, when the door is shut against all. This is explained more particularly, *Matt. vii. 20, &c.*

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matt. vii. (6, &c.)* To your care and circumspection respecting your own characters, in order to qualify you to reprove others, add prudence, and do not throw away your reproofs where they are not likely to be well received. This would be to do them no good, and to expose yourselves to unnecessary insult and injury.

*Luke xiii. (30.)* The Gentiles, who now enjoy the fewest advantages, shall be the most distinguished, and the Jews, who have had the most advantages of a religious nature, shall be far behind them.

### SECTION XXV.

*Jesus cures the Leper and the Centurion's Servant, and raises the Widow's Son.*

*Matt. viii. 1—13; Mark i. 39—45; Luke v. 12—16; vii. 1—15.*

HAVING considered all the particulars of Jesus's excellent moral instructions, in his discourse on the Mount, we proceed to attend to the remaining transactions of his life, every incident of which deserves attention, both with respect to the evidence of his divine mission, and to the doctrines he taught.

*Matt. viii. 2.* The word which is here and elsewhere translated *worship*, properly signifies, *to prostrate oneself*, which, in the East, is a profession of profound respect, but such respect as is due to men is all that was meant at the time our translation was made.† In 1 *Chron. xxix. 20*, the

\* "I am satisfied the question was asked by persons who thought only of a temporal kingdom. But the fact was, that few of the Jews were saved, i. e. embraced the gospel. I do not think that Jesus speaks of final happiness, though what is observed above is very just." *Jebb. (P.)*

† This is sufficiently proved by the terms *worship* and *worshipful*, still applied to magistrates and to public bodies in official situations. Bishop Pearce, so generally



*whole congregation* is said to have *worshipped the Lord and the king*; and certainly those who are said to have worshipped Christ in the course of his ministry, did not consider him in any other light than that of a prophet, inspired by God. Yet some make use of this language as an argument for the divinity of Christ.

3.\* Jesus went about healing all manner of diseases, but particular mention is only made of his most remarkable cures; and both with respect to the nature of the diseases, and the circumstances attending the cures, they were particularly worthy of notice, as a proof that the power by which he acted was divine, or that of God himself; as he always said, that of himself he could do nothing, and that the Father who was in, or with him, did those works (*John* v. 19; xiv. 10). *Leprosy* is represented to be a particularly loathsome and infectious disease, common in the East, and hardly ever known to be cured, and then only after a long time. The sudden cure of it, therefore, was the more astonishing, and it was completely effected to the satisfaction of all present, by a touch and a few words.

4. The miraculous cure of the leprosy was thought by the Jews to be characteristic of the Messiah, and therefore there was peculiar reason for enjoining this man's silence.† It is sufficient, however, to say that the crowds of people that flocked to Christ from all quarters on account of his late miracle at Capernaum, were so great, that, for the present, our Lord might not choose to draw any more people about him. He had retired to the mountain purposely to avoid this crowd. It is observable that this is the first time we have any account of our Lord's enjoining silence on any person whom he cured, and this we see he did not do till he found himself greatly incommoded by the fame of his public miracles.

According to the Jewish ritual, the priests had certain

disposed to explain the scriptural phraseology, has not ventured a remark on the very equivocal term *worship*. See *Com.* I. p. 51. "To suppose that *religious adoration* is designed in these cases, by *προσκυνεω*, is equally contrary to Scripture and common sense." *Wakefield*, pp. 116, 117. On *προσκυνησαι*, (*Chap.* ii. 2,) to *pay homage*, see *ibid.* p. 24.

Sir Thomas Smith, in 1565, wrote his *Commonwealth*, which was first printed in 1621. Speaking of the king in the English government, he thus describes *civil homage*: "No man speaketh to the prince, nor serveth at the table, but in adoration and kneeling." *Commonwealth of England*, 1633, pp. 103, 104. See Vol. II. p. 455.

\* "He was cured of his leprosy." *New Test. Gr. and Eng.* 1729, I. p. 24. See also *Pearce*, I. p. 51; *Wakefield*, p. 117.

† *Benson's Life of Christ*, p. 340. (*P.*) See *Pearce* on *Chap.* ix. 30, I. p. 62; *Wakefield*, p. 117.

rules given them, by which to distinguish the proper leprosy from other diseases of a similar nature; and upon inspection they pronounced whether the diseased person might live in society or not. *For a testimony unto them*, is generally understood to mean to procure the most authentic testimony of a perfect cure; but from *Mark's* account (*Chap. i. 44*) he seems to have had another view. "See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." Had he published the cure beforehand, the priests might have found some pretence for cavilling, and have refused to pronounce him cured. However, the same evangelist says that the injunction was without effect, for he adds, "He went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter." Probably, therefore, the chief reason for enjoining silence was to avoid the great concourse of people which such a miracle was sure to attract.

5.\* *A centurion* in the Roman army had the command of a hundred men; so that he had a rank something similar to that of a captain with us.

9. *Under authority*,† i. e. I who am myself under the command of a superior officer, have yet soldiers under me, who are perfectly obedient to me.‡

11.§ *From the east and from the west*, i. e. from distant parts of the earth.

13.|| This cure was similar to that of the nobleman's son in the same city of *Capernaum*, which probably he had heard of, and therefore well knowing the aversion strict Jews had to enter the houses of Gentiles, he modestly requests that Jesus would not move from the place from which he was; having the firmest faith in his power of curing at a distance, as well as near at hand, which he expresses by a striking comparison, comparing the power that Jesus had over diseases, to his own power over the persons under his immediate authority; an instance of faith which Jesus ob-

\* It has been conjectured that according to *Luke vii. 3, 7*, the centurion had no personal interview with Jesus, but that the language here used is a *Hebrew* phraseology, attributing to persons the actions they perform by others. See *Le Cene*, p. 344; *Pearce*, I. p. 5.

† See *Bowyer*, p. 6; *Wakefield*, p. 118.

‡ See *Pearce*, I. p. 52.

§ "Rather lie down, i. e. at table with them." *Ibid.* See *Wakefield*, pp. 118, 119.

|| *Comp. Pearce*, I. p. 53; and *Wakefield*, p. 119. There is "the following addition in many MSS.: *And the centurion returned to his house, and found, in that very hour, his servant in health; which—appears to be interpolated from Luke vii. 10.*" *Ibid.*



served he had not found in his own countrymen. And he takes this opportunity of saying that many Gentiles from all parts of the world would be distinguished by faith, and other virtues, more than many Jews, and would thereby become entitled to a place in the kingdom of heaven, when many of the descendants of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, would be excluded. Whereas many Jews have maintained, that all persons of their race would have this honour, and that it was reserved for them only, though, as I have observed before, this is not the doctrine of the modern Jews, who only say, that if by their good works they be received into heaven, it will be to a place of high rank in proportion to the great severity of their discipline in this life; they being obliged to observe many things naturally ungrateful to them, from which the rest of mankind are excused. I would observe that this cure being performed when Jesus was at a distance, and in behalf of a stranger, excludes all idea of collusion. Such cures could only be wrought by the power of God, which is the same in all places, and at all times. This disorder was *the palsy*, from which, if persons do recover, it is slowly, whereas this cure was both immediate and perfect.

*Luke v. 12. In a certain city.* This must have been in the confines of the city, for lepers were not allowed to live in cities, the disease being infectious.

13. One of the things peculiar to Jesus was the power of working miracles attending him, as far as appears, constantly, wherever he went. At least no proper occasion occurred on which he did not work a miracle. The same, however, was the case with Peter and Paul, and some others, for a short time; though it did not attend them through life, and it must be considered that the whole period of our Lord's ministry was short; and as he was appointed to open this great scene, it may well be supposed to have been requisite that he should be distinguished in this manner. Many have supposed that it was peculiar to Christ to work miracles by his own power, and that it depended upon his own will only. But, besides that he expressly says that *of himself he could do nothing*, and that *the Father within him did the works*, so that the performance of them must necessarily have depended on the will of the Father, and not his own proper will only, it is evident from the history of the resurrection of Lazarus, that a silent prayer at least preceded the working of all his miracles; for he says, *I know that thou hearest me always*, which implies that

he had prayed for divine assistance on similar occasions, and that the power was that of God, in answer to his prayers. Besides, if we judge from the language of Scripture, and attend only to small portions of the lives of other men, we might infer that they had the same power which has been ascribed to Christ, especially with respect to Peter, of whom we read, *Acts* v. 15, 16, "that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one." This account fully equals any thing we read of our Saviour himself, and yet it is not supposed that these cures were performed by any power belonging to Peter, or that it depended on his mere will like that of walking; neither, therefore, ought we to infer the same with respect to those of Jesus. So with respect to Paul, we read, *Acts* xix. 12, "From his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

We now proceed to an account of one of the most remarkable of the miracles of Jesus, his raising a dead person to life.

vii. 11, 12. Besides that the great number of the miracles of Jesus excludes all idea of collusion, or imposition, (for no impostor would have ventured upon so many as he did, especially in the presence of enemies, whose inveteracy would have made them sharp-sighted,) there were peculiar circumstances attending most of them, which shew that any imposition was impossible. Here we see Jesus enter a city where he was probably a stranger, for no man could have lived more obscurely than he had done, and consequently had fewer connexions, till he appeared upon the public theatre of the world. He had not even that time for retirement and study which is ascribed to *Zoroaster* and *Mahomet*. In this place he meets with great crowds of people, in clear day-light, and in the open streets, accompanying a corpse to the place of interment.\* The deceased was an only son, and the mother naturally much distressed. Can any body think it probable that this young man was not really dead? Would a mother have committed her

\* *Josephus* says, "Our law hath shewed it to be regular, that all who pass by, when any one is buried, should accompany the funeral, and join in the lamentation." *Contra Apion*, B. ii. Sect. xxvii. *Whiston*. See *Pearce*, I. p. 345.



only son to the grave without being assured of this fact, and must not many of the company have seen it? For in that country the dead were carried in an open bier, or shell, where the body lay exposed to the inspection of all who chose to view it.

The people of the East bury their dead without coffins, but they carry them to the grave on a bier, that is often shaped like one.\*

13. There are in the history of Jesus many traces of a feeling, compassionate temper, and it appeared on this occasion. The marks of his compassion for the distress of the poor widow, were, no doubt, perceived by the bystanders. Also by his first addressing himself to her, and bidding her in an affectionate manner cease from weeping, he would in some measure prepare her for the joyful scene that he had planned for her.

14. As the news of the miracles of Jesus had by this time reached every place in Galilee, the persons who carried this bier would naturally stop when he laid hold on it, and ordered them so to do, which it cannot be supposed they would have done at the command of a mere stranger.

15. We see here that no more exertion was necessary to raise the dead, than to heal the most ordinary disease. It was effected by his speaking a word; for the power being that of God, all difference of greater or less absolutely vanishes. With respect to the creation of all things, we read, [*Psalm xxxiii. 9,*] that "he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." This person was both restored to life and to perfect health and strength; for he sat up immediately, and began to speak. When persons seemingly dead are brought to life again, (which is never effected without much labour and various applications,) there are many symptoms of returning life long before complete restoration.

As there was something affectionate in the manner in which Jesus opens this scene, there was also at the close of it; for, upon the young man being restored to life, Jesus did not leave the company abruptly, but *delivered him to his mother*, probably saying something pertinent on the occasion, though the historian has not recorded it: for such an action would naturally be accompanied with some words.

16. We have here a natural account of the impression

\* Harmer, II. p. 156. (P.)

that was made on the people present by this astonishing miracle. It is said that *fear came upon them all*. Wonder or astonishment would have been better than *fear*. But indeed such a degree of astonishment is necessarily accompanied with fear, it proving the presence of such a power as all must dread. Both in the Old and New Testament we often find expressions of fear in persons apprehending themselves in the presence of God, or a prophet.\* It is natural in the presence of persons of superior rank or power; because, if they have any consciousness of guilt, they may apprehend that a power they cannot resist may be employed against them. In whatever manner Jesus performed this miracle, we see that the people present did not infer that he did it by any power of his own, but that he was *a great prophet*, and that God by him once more *visited his people*. They never thought of his being more than man. It is, indeed, universally acknowledged by all ancient Christian writers, who were advocates for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, that even the apostles had no higher idea of him than that of a man, before his ascension into heaven.†

The fame of the preceding miracles of Jesus is said to have filled all Galilee; but this being of a much more extraordinary nature, and performed in the presence of so great a multitude, would be still more talked of; and accordingly it is said to have filled all Judea as well as Galilee. From this time, therefore, no doubt, Jesus would be sufficiently watched by his many enemies; as closely as any unbelievers of the present day could wish him to have been, and with eyes as sharp as their own. And yet he continued to work miracles in the same open manner, conscious of no imposition, and fearing no detection; which, indeed, he used no precautions to guard against.

\* See *supra*, pp. 66, 67, 70.

† Dr. Watts, even before he had discovered that the doctrine of "three real persons going to make up one true God" was a "strange and perplexing notion," admitted "that the disciples, during the life of Christ, had not arrived to any firm belief of his godhead." As if they could have conversed familiarly with their Master, had they only suspected him to be God Almighty!

This author, just before, made the following remarks:—"Had the disciples believed that their Master was the true God, we cannot but suppose that amongst their many doubts and queries they would have asked him this obvious and important one, how could he be God, and his Father be God also, and yet not two Gods? But we find nothing of this kind, though they put many a question to him both of less difficulty and less importance. Nor do we find that they talked of him to the world under any character of godhead; but, on the contrary, we always find them speaking of him as a man, and that not only in his life-time, but just after his death too, as a great prophet that was risen up amongst them." See Watts's *Questions concerning Jesus*, (Sect. v.) *Remnants of Time*, (xxi.,) *Works*, 1800, V. pp. 268, 270; VII. p. 477.



## SECTION XXVI.

*Jesus stills a Tempest, and cures the Demoniac at Gadara.*

*Matt.* viii. 18—34; *Mark* iv. 35—41; v. 1—21;

*Luke* ix. 57—62; viii. 22—40.

IN this part of the history of Jesus we have an account of two very extraordinary miracles, but of very different kinds; but both of them so circumstanced that there could not have been any imposition in either of the cases.

*Matt.* viii. 18. It is no wonder that Jesus was followed by great crowds of people in so populous a country as Galilee, after performing so extraordinary a miracle as that of raising a dead man to life. In order to avoid this concourse of people, with whom he could not conveniently have held any discourse, and by whom he would have been much incommoded, he crossed the sea.

19, 20.\* It is probable that this *Scribe*, and the other persons, who expressed their resolution to follow Jesus, had conceived the idea of his being the Messiah, and therefore thought that by attaching themselves to him, they might in time gain some great preferment under him. These were, indeed, at first the views and expectations of the apostles themselves, as we shall see on several occasions. Jesus, however, took this and every other opportunity of informing them, that he had nothing in this world to reward their attachment to him. He was even more destitute of provision for himself than brute creatures, having no place of abode that he could call his own.

22. Jesus often affected a proverbial, and sometimes even an enigmatical way of speaking. Such sayings would be more attended to, better remembered, and make stronger impressions when recollected afterwards, though not well understood at the time.

*Let the dead bury their dead.* Let worldly-minded men mind worldly things.† Death is often used in this moral and figurative sense, as [*Ephes.* ii. 1], *dead in trespasses*

\* *The Son of Man.* "A Hebrew phrase, expressive of humiliation and debasement, and on that account applied emphatically by the meek and lowly Jesus, to himself." Wakefield, p. 122.

† "Conformément aux maximes des Juifs, et des philosophes anciens, que les méchants sont des morts en vivant." See *Le Cene*, p. 758; *Pearce*, l. p. 54; *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 396; Wakefield, p. 122.

*and sins, &c.* It is probable that this man thought that by waiting till the death of his father, the uncomfortable life that our Lord now led would be over, and he would be entering upon his kingdom.

27. This is one of the few miracles that were not of a beneficent nature, though it was in part of that kind, as it stilled the fears of all who were in the ship, and perhaps prevented a shipwreck, in which many lives might have been lost. It shewed that the power he exerted was properly *divine*, extending to all the laws of nature which were controlled by it,\* and not a charm, or *talisman*, which was supposed to have only one power or mode of operation.

It is evident, however, on this, as well as on former occasions, that the persons who were present were not led by this miracle to suppose that Jesus himself was any thing more than a man; though a man extraordinarily aided by God as a distinguished prophet. *What manner of man is this?* say they.† They had no idea of his divine, angelic, or super-angelic nature, but one of the human race. And what do we know of Jesus more than they and the apostles saw of him, on which to found any opinion?

We cannot be surprised at the astonishment of those who were spectators of this great miracle. It was of such a nature as no impostor would have attempted. The storm must have been very violent to have put the persons on board, in fear of their lives. In these circumstances an impostor would have been more alarmed than any other person; and that a perfect calm should immediately follow the command of Jesus, must have implied, that his word was accompanied with the same power that originally made both the sea and the dry land, his power who *spoke and it was done, who commanded, and all things stood fast.*‡

29. *Luke* [viii. 31] says, "they besought Jesus that he would not command them to go out into the deep;" from which we may infer that, in the opinion of the Jews, all these *demons* were to be sent, in due time, to some place of punishment under the earth, or under the sea, but that they were to range at large for a given time.

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 55; *Wakefield*, pp. 122, 123.

† "If they had believed him to be the true God that made the heavens and the earth, the winds and the seas, they would never have expressed so much surprise and wonder at his rebuking the wind and bidding the sea be calm. I confess the word *man* is not in the original; but still their wonder at the obedience that was paid him by the elements seems an argument that they did not believe him to be the Almighty God that made them." *Watts* (on *Luke* viii. 24, 25), *Questions*, (Sect. v.) *Works*, V. p. 268.

‡ See *supra*, pp. 66, 67, 70, 97.



As it was the current opinion among the Jews that madness was owing to a possession with an evil spirit, the madmen themselves, who once had their senses, must, of course, have had the same notion. These madmen, as is not uncommon, knew themselves to be so, and therefore thought themselves to be possessed, and spoke in that character. \*

30—32. For reasons, of which we may not be competent judges, our Lord thought proper to transfer the madness from these men to the *swine*: perhaps to punish them for keeping those animals, which by the law of Moses they were not allowed to eat, and which by a law of *Hyrca-nus* they were forbidden to keep. †

That these swine were supernaturally seized with madness, is evident from their running headlong into the sea, and being drowned there. It could not have been in the power of any man to do this; no animal whatever being so intractable, and so difficult to be led or driven. And that any number of swine should voluntarily, and without any supernatural impulse, run into the sea, was never known. If by any violence they had been driven into the sea, they certainly would have made for the land; and as they swim very well, the greater part, or a considerable number of them, would no doubt have been saved: for it is not said that the sea was in a storm, nor are the shores of that sea rocky.

Had this action, by which many persons, perhaps innocent ones, received considerable damage, been properly that of a man, it would not have been justifiable: but since it was of God, it is sufficient if it be analogous to his other works; and none can deny that the innocent as well as the guilty suffer alike in storms, earthquakes, and other natural causes, all of which are as properly the works of God as this miracle of the destruction of the swine. This miracle supplies another argument for the miracles of Jesus having been immediately prompted by God, by whose power they were effected.

34. It is generally imagined that the people of this country *besought Jesus to depart out of their coasts*, through dislike to him and his doctrine; but their request might be dictated by the same apprehension that led Peter to say, after the miraculous draught of fishes, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* ‡ They were convinced that Jesus was a pro-

\* See *Wakefield*, p. 123.

† See *Farmer on Demoniacs*, 1805, pp. 178, 179; *Wakefield*, p. 124.

‡ See *supra*, pp. 66, 67.

phet, and might be afraid that he was come to punish them for their sins. It is observable that Jesus ordered these madmen to publish the miracle of their cure. Perhaps, as he was leaving their country, and did not intend to spend much time there, he was not apprehensive of any inconvenience from it. It could not be owing to the incredulity of the people; for if they had not been convinced of his miraculous power, they would not have contented themselves with *beseeking* him to leave their coasts, but, irritated at the loss of their swine, would probably have insulted and abused him.

*Mark v. 3. In the tombs.* “Dr. Shaw observes, that among the Moors the graves of the principal citizens have cupolas, or vaulted chambers, of three, four, or more yards square, built over them; and that they frequently lie open, and afford an *occasional shelter* from the inclemency of the weather.” \*

5. Cutting and slashing the body, especially the arms, is often used as an expression of great anguish or vehemence of passion in the East. †

*Luke ix. 61. To settle my affairs at home. ‡*

62. *Fit; ευθετε, properly disposed.*

## PARAPHRASE.

As no man is fit to manage a plough who looks behind him, and is not intent upon his work; so no man is fit for the kingdom of heaven who does not give his whole attention to it, and who, in the present circumstances of things, is not even ready to abandon all for it.

## SECTION XXVII.

*The Cure of the Paralytic Person, the Call of Matthew, and the Discourse of Jesus with the Pharisees.*

*Matt. ix. 1—17; Mark ii. 1—22; Luke v. 17—39.*

AFTER the remarkable cure of the demoniac, or, according to *Matthew*, of the two demoniacs, on the other, or the eastern side of the sea of Galilee, Jesus returned to the western side, where we generally find him, and continued his course of miracles and moral instructions as before.

\* *Harmer*, I. p. 257. See his *Notes*, p. 59; *N. T.* 1729, I. p. 248.

† See *Harmer*, II. p. 516. (*P.*)

‡ *Wakefield*. (*P.*)



*Matt. ix. 1.* That is, *Capernaum*, where he or his family probably resided after having left *Nazareth*. Here he had performed the great miracle of the cure of the nobleman's son, who met him at *Cana*. Here he first preached in a public synagogue, when he cured a demoniac; and in this city he cured Peter's wife's mother, which brought so great a crowd about him, that he had been obliged to leave the city in a private manner very early the next morning; and here he afterwards cured the Roman centurion's servant.\* It is no wonder, therefore, that the people of this place should have the most perfect confidence in his power to cure any disorder whatever.

2. *Son*. An expression of condescension and tenderness.†

*The palsy* is a disorder which seldom gives way to any power of medicine, and then never suddenly. This man being confined to his bed must have been perfectly helpless, and consequently in such a state as was quite hopeless.

3. By *blasphemy* the Jews appear to have meant any expressions savouring of arrogance with respect to God, as the assuming of more power than they thought God would give a man, and not always something *against God*, or derogating from his perfections, censuring his institutions or his government. No man retained a more uniform reverence for God than Jesus did; but being a prophet of the highest order, he made use of language which no preceding prophet had used before: and it is remarkable that on this occasion, and others also, when Jesus perceived his hearers disposed to cavil, he chose to use such language as they might more easily cavil at, that they might fully shew their dispositions.‡ Thus, when he might have said, as he usually did, *Rise up and walk*, or some other expression importing nothing more than the removal of the disorder, he here made use of a phrase that was synonymous, indeed, in the sense in which he used it, but which was likewise capable of another and very offensive meaning.§

\* See *supra*, pp. 61—63, 68, 70, 93.

† "This affectionate manner of address to strangers frequently occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures; and but seldom in the ancient authors of other nations." *Wakefield*, p. 126.

‡ It has, however, been remarked, "that *sin* and *affliction*, and *to forgive sin* and *to heal sickness*, are equivalent expressions in the Hebrew language: so that the charge of *blasphemy* should seem to imply great *inconsistency* and *malice* in the accuser." *Ibid.* pp. 126, 127.

§ "Jesus chose, as he himself asserts, one expression in preference to the other, that they might perceive, from the salutary consequence of his peremptory com-

6. *Take up thy bed.* Meaning the carpet on which he was brought, and on which he slept.\*

By this it appears that by the phrase *thy sins be forgiven thee*, Jesus at first only meant, may thy disorder be removed, sin being considered as the cause of evil in general; and that, as both the expressions were equally easy of pronunciation, he was at liberty to make use of which of them he pleased; and the sudden recovery of the sick person from this deplorable situation, did not of itself prove more than Jesus's power of healing: but as he chose the more obnoxious expression, after it had been remarked upon in that sense, he seemed to intimate that he had the power which his hearers thought to be conveyed by it, viz. that God had invested him with a power of discerning the real characters of men, and consequently of pronouncing whether they were entitled to the divine forgiveness or not, the same power that he will display in a more ample manner at the day of judgment. But this is no greater power than God may give to any other man, as he did to *Peter*, when he pronounced (*Acts viii. 23*), that *Simon of Samaria was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity*, which implied that his sins were not forgiven.

8. It is evident that the multitude which saw this great miracle inferred nothing more from it, than that Jesus was a man endued with great power by God, and by no means that he himself was God, or possessed of a nature more than human.

There are some other circumstances attending this miracle, not mentioned by *Matthew*, but not omitted by *Mark* or *Luke*: the account of the former I shall therefore consider.

*Mark ii. 1. After some days.* "Some of the Latin MSS.," says *Pearce*, "have *octo dies, eight days*, and seem to have read in the Greek MSS., from which the Latin version was made, *δι' ἡμερῶν*, i. e. *after eight days*, ἡ being the numeral letter for eight." Of this I had no knowledge, when, from other circumstances, I limited this excursion to about that space of time. *Pearce*, however, thinks "the distance of time must have been greater;"† but then he, with the generality of commentators, supposes Christ to have preached three years and a half.

mand, *thy sins are forgiven thee*, that he was a *teacher*, divinely commissioned not only to *heal diseases*, but also to *forgive sins*; and to be in the most extensive manner the *Saviour* of the world. See *Mal. iii. 20.* *Wakefield*, p. 127.

\* *Harmer*, II. p. 67, Note. (P.)

† See *Com. I. p. 218.*



4. Dr. Shaw supposes that our Lord might be preaching in the court, or quadrangle of the house, over which it was customary to extend a covering, or veil, to shelter persons from the heat, &c., and that the people who brought the paralytic person carried him up the staircase, which is generally within the court, and only removed that temporary covering of the open court in order to let him down by the side of the wall near the place where Jesus was. To let down, *δια του κεραμωον*, he shews, does not mean *through the tiling*, but *by the side of it*; just as Paul was let down *δια του τειχους* *by the wall* of Damascus, *Acts ix. 25.\**

But as it is here said that there was no room to receive the persons who brought this sick man, no, not so much as about the door, Jesus was probably in the house, and therefore some part of the roof was taken off, which might perhaps be done without much noise or inconvenience of any kind, as their buildings were usually constructed. The flat roofs of oriental houses will make this operation much more easy than it could be with ours.

*Matt. ix. 11.†* *Publicans* were odious to the Jews, both on account of their being employed by the Romans to collect the tribute of them as a conquered people, and likewise on account of the extortions they were often guilty of.

13. We have here an example of the Jewish mode of comparison. The meaning is not that sacrifices were improper, but that mercy, and other moral duties and dispositions, are things of superior value.‡

15.§ In this, Jesus discovers the tenderness he had for his disciples, in not imposing upon them more than they were able to bear. He foresaw a great deal of affliction before them, after he should have left them, and he was not willing to distress them unnecessarily, and before the time.

17.|| *Luke* (v. 39)¶ adds another saying of Jesus with respect to *wine*, which seems to have little or no connexion with the former, and was delivered on some other occasion. However, I shall give a paraphrase by which his meaning may be explained on the idea of this being given in connexion.

\* *Shaw's Travels*, p. 211. (P.) See Harwood's *Introduction*, 1771, II. pp. 80—86; *Pearce*, I. pp. 213, 214.

† *And sinners*. "A technical phrase" for "unconverted Heathen.—It is not to be imagined that Levi would invite men of profligate character to an entertainment with Jesus." *Impr. Vers.* p. 143.

‡ See *Hosea* vi. 6, Vol. XII. p. 349; *Wakefield*, p. 128.

§ See *ibid.* ¶ See *ibid.* pp. 128, 129.

¶ This verse is wanting in the Cambridge MSS. and Latin copies, nor are there any traces of it in the other gospels. Dr. Owen in *Bowyer*. (P.)

## PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* ix. (17); *Luke* v. (39) Not only is it inconvenient to put things together that do not suit one another, as a piece of new cloth to an old garment, or new wine into old leathern bottles;\* but even too sudden a transition from one thing to another is not agreeable. Thus, persons who have been used to drink old wine cannot immediately reconcile themselves to that which is new: for though this be more pleasant to others, they think the old, to which they have been accustomed, to be better; and it is adviseable to indulge men in their innocent prejudices and habits.

## SECTION XXVIII.

*The Cure of the Woman who had the bloody Issue, the Raising of Jairus's Daughter, and the Cure of the two Blind Men, and the Dumb Demoniac.*

*Matt.* ix. 18—34; *Mark* v. 22—43; *Luke* viii. 41—56.

It is remarkable that there is more business recorded as transacted on one day in the part of the gospel history to which we are now attending, than in any other in the history of Jesus, viz. the call of *Matthew*, the discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees, the application of *Jairus*, and the raising of his daughter from the dead; the cure of the woman who had the issue of blood, and probably, also, the cure of the two blind men and the dumb demoniac: and yet this is not more than might fall within the compass of a day. We have already attended to the two first articles, and now proceed to the latter. The scene of all these transactions is still at *Capernaum*.

*Matt.* ix. 18. *My daughter is now dead.*† According to *Matthew*, *Jairus* thought his daughter to be actually dead. According to *Mark* [v. 23] and *Luke* [viii. 42] she was only at the point of death. Perhaps the father did not know certainly whether she was dead or not; but having heard that Jesus had raised from the dead the son of the widow at *Nain*, he might have no doubt of his power even to raise his daughter from the dead.

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 275, 276; *Joshua* ix. 4, 13; *Job* xxxii. 19; *Pearce*, I. p. 60.

† "Is even now expiring." *Harm.* 1780, p. 62. "Is upon the point of death." *New Testament*, 1729, I. p. 30. See *Pearce*, I. pp. 60, 61; *Wakefield*, p. 131; *Improved Version*, p. 20.



*Luke viii. 44. To touch the hem of his garment.* Probably to kiss it; which is a mark of profound respect and reverence.\* Being in a state of uncleanness, she might think it wrong to touch the body of Jesus, and on that account contented herself with touching his clothes.

*Mark v. 30.* Jesus knew, no doubt by a divine impulse, that the woman was cured at the time that she touched him, and with his own concurrence; for we are not to suppose that the mere touching of him would in all cases, as by a charm, have necessarily cured any disease.

31. This freedom that the disciples of Jesus took with him on this occasion and others, is inconsistent with their considering him as any other than a man like themselves. What they say to him here is the same that they would have said to any other person who should have complained, as they thought without reason, of a trifling inconvenience.

34.† There is something peculiarly affectionate in the manner in which Jesus addresses this poor woman, calling her *daughter*, commending her for the strength of her faith, and assuring her that she was radically cured.

35. Being satisfied that the young woman was actually *dead*, they naturally considered it as a hopeless case; and therefore thought it was to no purpose to give Jesus the trouble of going to the house. If these persons had heard of his having raised to life the young man of *Nain*, they might consider it as so extraordinary a case, that it was unreasonable to expect a repetition of so great a miracle.

36. We see the affectionate manner of Jesus on this occasion, as well as the preceding, in desiring the father of the young woman not to be alarmed at the report of his servants, but to have the same faith that he would have had if they had not brought him such an account.

37. This is the *first* time that we find Jesus make choice of these three witnesses of particular events. The *second* was at his transfiguration, and the *third* at his agony in the garden. The reason seems to have been that he would not have any of these things to be generally known till a proper time afterwards. This, at least, was the case with respect to the transfiguration: but why this transaction might not have been known to all the apostles, as well as to those three, does not appear. The raising of the widow's son, and of Lazarus, which was done in the presence of great numbers,

\* See Harmer, II. p. 34. (P.)

† Go in peace "was the Jewish form of wishing well, when one man took his leave of another." Pearce (on *Luke vii. 50*), I. p. 348.

and which of course could not be secret, might seem to have required secrecy as much as this.

38. It is customary in the East for people to crowd to the place where persons are dead, and to bewail them in a noisy manner, in token of respect. Sir John Chardin says, that the concourse of people where persons lie dead is incredible. Every body runs thither, the poor and the rich; and the former more especially, make a strange noise.\*

Dr. Shaw says, that upon funeral occasions, it is also customary in the East to hire women to act the part of mourners, who, like *præficæ*, or mourning women of old, are *skilful in lamentation*, (*Amos* v. 16,) and great mistresses of those melancholy expressions: and, indeed, he says they perform their parts with such proper sounds, gestures and motions, that they rarely fail to work up the assembly to an extraordinary pitch of thoughtfulness and sorrow.†

39. By this soft phrase Jesus intimated that the death of this young woman would not be of long continuance, but would resemble a sound sleep, from which she would soon awake.‡

40. These women, who knew their business, and who had probably seen the young woman to be actually dead, mocking Jesus, shews that they had no doubt of her being dead: they, therefore, thought that he would only expose himself by going to cure her. Being persons of a low profession, and no serious characters, they would be under no restraint from a reverence for the person of Jesus.

42. According to *Luke*, [viii. 55,] Jesus commanded them to give her something to eat. This circumstance, as well as that of her walking, were sufficient proofs of her being restored not only to life, but also to perfect health. No wonder that all who were present were *astonished* at it.

Had not *Luke* so particularly referred the account of the raising of the widow's son at *Nain*, to an earlier period in the history, it would have been probable from the circumstances, that this was the first time that Jesus had raised any person from a state of death to life. We may still suppose this to have been the case if we admit that *Luke*, whose chronology is by no means exact, was mistaken with respect to the order of these events. We shall then perceive a natural gradation in the three miracles by which Jesus raised persons

\* See Harmer, II. pp. 135—137. (P.) Chardin MS. See Jer. xlviii. 36; Pearce (on Matt. ix. 23), I. p. 61.

† Shaw's Travels, p. 242. (P.) See Vol. XII. p. 362.

‡ See John xi. 11, 13; Pearce (on Matt. ix. 24), I. p. 62.



to life. The *first* was a person just dead, the *second* was one who was carried out to be buried, and the *third* had been dead and buried four days.

*Matt.* ix. 27—30. This is the first account of Jesus curing *blindness*, which is a disease that by natural means is never removed suddenly, except by a surgical operation, and then the wound is not soon healed. Here then we see the evident finger of God.

35. This man was both disordered in his senses, which was ascribed to the possession of *demons*, and also dumb: but both the disorders were cured at the same time.

34. *Beelzebub* (for so the *prince of demons* is called *Matt.* xii. 24) signifies *lord of flies*. It was the name of one of the gods of the *Philistines*. (2 *Kings* i. 2.) In the Greek of the New Testament it is *Beelzeboul*, which is *lord of a dunghill*, perhaps so called by the Jews out of contempt. How this personage came to be considered as *prince of the demons* does not appear. Our Lord uses the word as synonymous to *Satan*, and *devil*, that is, the principle, or source of evil in general, a mere allegorical personage.

We shall, on a future occasion, hear what Jesus had to observe with respect to this malicious censure of the Pharisees, than which nothing could be a more evident mark of obduracy of mind, such as no reasonable evidence could satisfy.

## SECTION XXIX.

*Jesus walks in the Corn-fields, cures the Man who had a withered Hand, and appoints the Twelve Apostles.*

*Matt.* xii. 1—21; x. 2—4; *Mark* ii. 23—28; iii. 1—19; *Luke* vi. 1—16.

*MATT.* xii. 1. This by the laws of Moses they were allowed to do, in any person's field or vineyard through which they had occasion to pass, but they were not to carry any away with them.\*

2. The *Pharisees* were those of the Jews who professed the most zealous attachment to the laws of Moses. They not only rigorously observed all the ritual of it, but added many observances of their own invention. And what is peculiarly remarkable, notwithstanding the most express and repeated declarations to the contrary in the ancient prophets,

\* See *Deut.* xxiii. 24, 25; Vol. XI. p. 290; *Wakefield*, pp. 168, 169.

they laid more stress on things of this nature than on moral duties. Nothing can shew in a stronger light than these facts do, how prone men are to attend to any thing rather than to their hearts and their lives. This case, that of the superstitious Catholics, and the practices of many Heathen nations, shew that there is no austerity so painful that men will not endure rather than do what seems to be much easier, viz. attend to the due regulation of their appetites and passions, on which the whole of our moral conduct depends. We know, however, and are repeatedly told in the Scriptures, that it is the heart that God looks to, and to outward appearances no farther than they indicate what is in the heart from which they proceed. Whatever it be that God and the prophets in his name appoint of a ceremonial or external nature, ought, no doubt, to be done, whether we can see any reason for it or not; but not so as to leave things of more importance undone. Accordingly, we find on several occasions, that prophets and other good men have paid no regard to positive institutions, when the observance of them would have interfered with the practice of moral duties. Jesus took frequent opportunities of shewing the absurdity of the conduct of the Jewish Pharisees in this respect, particularly with regard to their superstitious observance of the sabbath.

As no manner of work was, by the fourth commandment, to be done on the sabbath, they were not content to forbid *labour* properly so called, that labour by which men gain their subsistence, but every action that could be avoided. But for the same reason they might have forbidden persons to go out of their houses, or even out of their beds; but they had a rule by which they were allowed to go to the next synagogue on the sabbath, or a mile or two, which was therefore called *a sabbath-day's journey*.

4. *David* did not, strictly speaking, *enter into the house of God*, but met the priest carrying away *the shew-bread*, which was to have been eaten by them only; and this he took without being reprov'd for it. He was in great haste to escape from *Saul*, and had not had time to make any provision for his journey.

*Mark* ii. 26. *In the days of Abiathar the high-priest.* It appears from 1 *Sam.* xxi. 3, &c., that *Abimelech* was high-priest when David took the shew-bread, and not *Abiathar*, who was his son, and succeeded him.\*

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 216. "This clause is omitted in the *Cambridge* and other MSS." *Newcome in Improved Version*, p. 82.



*Matt. xii. 5. Profane the sabbath*, by killing cattle for sacrifice, which was a laborious business.\*

6. Meaning himself; and he might say that he was *greater than the temple*, as a mere prophet; though he might also mean to intimate, without being more explicit, that he was the Messiah whom the Jews looked towards as the greatest of all the prophets.†

7. This is quoted from *Hosea vi. 6*, but did not mean that God did not choose sacrifice, but that he preferred mercy and other good works to it. It was the Jewish mode of expressing the preference of one thing to another.‡

8. *Son of Man* is an indefinite expression, and by it, for some reason that does not clearly appear, Jesus frequently chose to characterize himself. But it may be understood of any man, and in this sense it is true that man is *lord of the sabbath*, it being appointed for his use, as it is expressed by *Mark (ii. 27)*. And as this is immediately connected with the other expression from *Matthew*, it seems to be explanatory of it.§ It is not probable that at this time Jesus chose publicly to announce himself to be the Messiah, who had power to alter the ceremonial law; nor, indeed, does it appear that Jesus did at any time, or in any respect, set aside this part of the law of Moses. To the Jews it will probably be always obligatory, though they should become Christians.||

10. This disorder is a partial palsy, which is never cured suddenly; so that the immediate and complete cure of this disorder, and of others of a similar nature, and in the presence of persons far from being prejudiced in favour of Jesus, which was the case in this instance, was with the greatest propriety selected by the evangelists as proof of his divine mission.

We see the extreme captiousness and arrogance of these teachers of the law, in questioning a man whose power of working miracles they could not deny, in this manner, as if God would have empowered any man to act contrary to his will. Yet, presuming on their influence, and knowing that other leading men in the country had taken umbrage at the reputation of Jesus, they were willing to make a handle, even of his doing good, and that by the immediate power of God, in order to take advantage against him.

\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 169, 170.

† See *ibid.* p. 170.

‡ See Vol. XII. p. 349; *Wakefield*, pp. 170, 171.

§ This sense is maintained by *Le Cene*, pp. 744, 745. See *Gratius* examined by *Wakefield*, p. 171.

See Vol. XII. pp. 442—482.

11. Here Jesus appeals to their own customs, which were evidently contrary to their general maxims: but it seems to have been understood at the time, that acts of *necessity*, or of *mercy*, were lawful on the sabbath day.\*

*Mark* iii. 6.† *Herodians*. These were rather a civil than a religious sect. All we know of them is, that they opposed the claims of the other Jews to an exemption from paying tribute to the Romans, by whose power Herod was king; and were in general adherents of the Romans.‡

How malignant must have been the disposition of these Pharisees to consult how to take the life of a man whose miraculous works they could not deny, because he did not court their favour, and they expected no advantage from him! But such is human nature, universally, in the same circumstances. Men who are void of a principle of piety and virtue will have their own advantage in view; and whatever does not favour that, they will, on one pretence or other, oppose, and even imagine they do right in so doing.

*Matt.* xii. 18. *Shew judgment to the Gentiles*; i. e. declare the law, the law that Jesus was to declare from God to all the world.§

20. *Till he send forth judgment unto victory*; i. e. "till he shall have settled and established the law or commandment."|| But it may only signify, in general, till he shall make the cause of righteousness and truth victorious.

This quotation is from *Isaiah*, (xlii. 4,) and if it relate to the Messiah, as it probably does, it is characteristic of his meekness, and unambitious temper. This appeared in Jesus enjoining silence on several persons in whose favour he had worked miracles, that he might not excite more attention than was necessary for the purpose of his mission.

21. The addition, *In his name shall the Gentiles trust*,¶ was not necessary to the evangelist's immediate purpose, but it follows the passage which he had occasion to quote, and it expresses the extensive benefit which the world would derive from the Messiah. He was to be a blessing not to

\* See *Grotius* in *Wakefield*, pp. 171, 172.

† "The Pharisees and the Herodians—held a consultation." *Newcome* (Marg.) in *Improved Version*, p. 83.

‡ See *Prideaux*, Pt. ii. B. v. *ad fin.* III. pp. 516—520; *Lardner*, I. pp. 126, 127; *Pearce* (on *Matt.* xxii. 16), I. p. 149.

§ *Pearce*, I. p. 82. (P.) "The evangelist appears to have quoted the prophecy of *Isaiah* from memory.—His expressions do not exactly correspond either to the original, or the version of the LXX." *Wakefield*, p. 172.

|| *Pearce*, I. p. 82. (P.) See *Le Cene*, pp. 778, 779; *Bowyer*, p. 9; *Wakefield*, p. 172.

¶ See *Boyer*, p. 9.



the Jews only, but to all nations, *a light to enlighten them*; as we in this country so remote from Judea are happy in experiencing.

x. 2. The apostles are here divided into pairs, probably as they were sent out upon their mission by *two and two*.\*

Hitherto Jesus had been accompanied in an irregular manner, as we may say, by all persons promiscuously, who had most leisure, and who were most struck with his miracles and discourses; and perhaps few persons attended him constantly. But from this time, directed no doubt by Infinite Wisdom, he proceeded to the choice of twelve constant companions; persons who being with him at all times, as of his family, might have an opportunity of knowing him thoroughly, and of observing his whole conduct; so that, without any supernatural assistance, they might be witnesses of his life, doctrine, miracles, death and resurrection, to that and every future age, and no reasonable doubt might remain concerning them.

That this was the reason of the appointment of these twelve, we may infer from what preceded the choice of another apostle to succeed Judas: for, on this occasion, Peter says, (*Acts* i, 21, 22,) “Wherefore of those men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” Having known him so long and so intimately, it could never be said that they were mistaken with respect to his person, and did not know him again after a separation of a few days. It appears, however, from this passage, that though twelve persons only were expressly appointed for this purpose, many others were sufficiently, if not equally qualified for the office of apostles, since others besides the twelve had attended Jesus almost as much.

That this measure, of the appointment of the twelve apostles, was taken with the greatest deliberation, and under a divine direction, may appear from what Luke (vi. 12) says of Jesus spending the preceding night in prayer: “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God,” or as it may be rendered, in *an oratory*, a place built for the purpose of prayer.

*Mark* iii. 14. Besides the principal design of setting apart

the twelve apostles, viz. that, as it is said, *they should be with him*, in order to be witnesses of his doctrine, miracles and resurrection, there was a farther use of it, viz. that Jesus might occasionally send them to preach in places where he could not conveniently go himself, on which occasion they were endued with the same powers which he had exercised.

19. These twelve apostles are, in all the evangelists, mentioned in the same order, beginning with *Peter*; who, without any particular designation, seems to have taken the lead among them, both before and after the resurrection of Jesus. He appears to have had a warm, honest heart, and to have had the faults naturally incident to such a character. But as he never exercised any power more than the other apostles, and had no appointment to be their head, it is with little reason that the bishops of Rome, as successors of this apostle, (if ever he was at Rome, and could be said to have been bishop there,) assert their claim of superiority to all other bishops in the Christian church.

*Judas* is always mentioned the last, in the catalogue of apostles, as, no doubt, the least worthy of the character.\* It is evident that Jesus knew from the beginning what his real character was, and what part he would act. But notwithstanding this, there was the greatest wisdom in the appointment of him, as it might be depended upon, that if he had been conscious of any imposture in the conduct of Jesus, he would have revealed it, rather than have hanged himself for anguish of mind; when, by the temptation of a bribe, he had been induced to betray him.

### SECTION XXX.

*The blind and dumb Demoniac, the Discourse concerning the Sin against the Holy Spirit, and the Sign from Heaven. Jesus's Mother and Brethren desire to speak to him.*

*Matt.* xii. 22—50; *Mark* iii. 20—35; *Luke* xi. 14—32; xii. 10; xviii. 19—21.

*MATT.* xii. 22. Previous to the history here recorded by *Matthew*, a little incident is mentioned by *Mark* (iii. 20, 21),

\* "The evangelists did not decline to mention those things, which might appear to be dishonourable to their Master or themselves.—When *Matthew* comes to the traitor, he does not write as an enemy, but as an historian; he does not say *that wicked and hateful wretch*, but calls him, from the place of his habitation, *Judas Iscariot*." *Chrysostom* (on *Matt.* x. 4) in *Lardner*, V. p. 151.



which shews the affectionate concern which the relations of Jesus had for him. Previous to this, Jesus had spent a whole night upon a mountain, and though he might have been in what the Jews call an *oratory*, or place for prayer, it was without a roof, and had no convenience for sleeping. Immediately after his passing the night in this place, the multitude crowded about him, so that he had had no time to take any refreshment.\* This his friends and relations would naturally think was too great exertion, and they might fear that, without his attending to it, he would quite exhaust himself: for the phrase *he is beside himself*,† shews nothing more than their great concern for him, as a man who neglected himself, not being aware of the natural consequence of so much exertion.

23. ‡ That is, the *Messiah*.

27. *By whom do your children cast them out?* Many Jews practised exorcism in order to expel *demons*,§ a practice that was certainly more liable to objection than the conduct of our Lord, who, without any *preparatory ceremony*, only commanded them peremptorily to depart.

30. *He that is not with me.* Some refer this to *Satan*, as if our Lord had said, He (*Satan*) not being with me, or in league with me, (as the preceding argument shews,) must be against me.|| But then I think it should have been *out*⊙, and not ♂.

31. *Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.* All the reproaches that were thrown upon our Lord himself, personally, he disregarded; but a reflection on the person and authority by which he acted, he considered as unpardonable. All the evidence of the gospel was the miraculous works performed by Christ, but more especially by the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. To evade and resist this evidence, and on such a very absurd pretence, as, that those glorious and benevolent works were performed by the agency of an evil spirit, argued such blind-

\* "It seems most likely that it was the multitude, not Jesus, whom his friends went out to lay hold of, and restrain, till they and their Master had gotten some refreshment, and of whom they said, *it is mad*. (See *Knatchbull*);" *Turner in Harm.* 1780, p. 74.

† "It was said he fainted away. See *Gen.* xlv. 26, LXX." *N. T.* 1729, p. 130. See *Hallett*, II. pp. 113, 114; *Wakefield in Theol. Repos.* IV. pp. 227—230, and his later translation of the phrase "he is gone out," *Notes*, 1791, pp. 28, 29; *Improved Version*, pp. 83, 84; *Pearce*, I. pp. 218, 219.

‡ "Is this? So the old *English Testament*." *Wakefield*, p. 172.

§ See *Jos. Antiq.* B. viii. Ch. ii. Sect. v.; *Lardner*, I. p. 489; *Pearce*, I. pp. 56, 84; *Wakefield*, pp. 174—176.

|| See *Pearce*, I. p. 85; *Wakefield*, p. 177.

ness, perverseness and hardness of heart, as must have been of the most malignant nature, and absolutely incurable: for no other means remained to convince and reform them.

32. \* *Neither in this age, nor in the age to come.* This may have been a proverbial expression, signifying that it should never be; or the two ages may mean the Jewish and Christian dispensations. It is to be observed, however, that this, like any other unpardonable sin, must be understood to be a sin not repented of. It is very possible, however, that our Lord did not mean to assert that the sin against the Holy Spirit was absolutely unpardonable, but only that any other sin shall be forgiven sooner than this, that is, this guilt is of a much deeper dye; using a common *Hebraism*, by which one thing is asserted, and another denied, merely to denote comparison,† as was observed before.

35. These just reflections Jesus was led to make from perceiving the malignant disposition which these Scribes and Pharisees shewed. No good man, who could therefore be disposed to think as favourably as possible of others, could have made the uncharitable reflections which they did.

36. *Idle word*, ἀργὸν λόγον, in a passage of *Origen*, signifies a *sophism*, or *false reasoning*, and with a view to deceive, as Dr. Macknight observes. In this, therefore, our Lord may be supposed to have referred, with great propriety and severity, to the conduct of the Pharisees on this very occasion, when they were endeavouring to deceive the people by their false reasoning, in order to prevent their becoming his disciples.‡

38. The repeated demands of the Jews to see *a sign* from heaven, seems to have arisen from the literal interpretation of *Daniel* vii. 13, 14: "Behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him." The Jews, therefore, expected that when the Messiah, here called *the Son of Man*, should come, it would be in the clouds; or at

\* See *Wall* in *Lardner*, XI. p. 146; *Wakefield*, pp. 177, 178.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 86; *Wakefield*, pp. 178, 179; *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 116.

‡ "I am inclined to think that ἀργόν, from ἀεργόν, is one of the words like ἀχρηστόν, which denotes something stronger than the derivation seems to import. Things not convenient, i. e. immoral actions, are not actions merely triflingly bad, but highly so. So here ἀργόν denotes calumniating words, highly wrong, i. e. those calumnies just uttered against him—as if he said, It is not for your *injurious actions* alone, but your *calumniating expressions* also, that you shall be brought to judgment." *Jebb*. (P.) See *Le Cene*, pp. 492—497; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 228—230; *Pearce*, I. p. 87; *Wakefield*, pp. 180, 181.



least that some extraordinary appearance in the heavens would be used to point him out to them.

Considering the general expectation of the Messiah by the Jews about the time of the appearance of Jesus, it is not surprising that the sight of his miracles should lead them to suppose that he might be the person. But there were some objections to this opinion, which the Scribes and Pharisees, and indeed the nation in general, could not easily get over. The principal of them was, his not assuming kingly power, which, however, they might suppose that he would do in due time. But another objection was grounded on the manner in which they supposed the Messiah would make his first appearance, which they thought, from this construction of the prophecy of Daniel, would be particularly illustrious.

This will in some measure explain why the Jews said that when the Messiah came, no man could know whence he would come, though they were at the same time persuaded that he would be a descendant of David, and be born at *Bethlehem*. They therefore knew both his family, and the place of his birth; but where he would be, antecedent to his coming in the clouds of heaven, to enter upon his kingdom, they could not tell.

39. \* It is evident, from this and other places, that our Lord often spake in such a manner as that he could not have meant to be perfectly understood by his hearers, at the time, but only afterwards, either when the minds of his disciples should be more enlightened, or when the events that he foretold should come to pass.

40. *In the heart of the earth.*† A Jewish phrase for simply *in the earth*. Thus, in *Ezek. xxviii. 2*, *Tyre* is said to be *in the heart of the sea*, though it was on an island, at a very small distance from the continent.

This is the first intimation that Jesus gave of his death and resurrection, and it was in the presence of a mixed multitude. Perhaps in part from this discourse, and in part from what might transpire from the apostles, when he afterwards told them more plainly that he was to be put to death, and that he should rise again the third day, with respect to which they were not enjoined secrecy, the enemies of Jesus

\* On *adulterous generation*, see *Wakefield*, p. 181; *Dodson in Com. and Ess. I.* pp. 192—196; *Isaiah*, pp. 156—161.

† “These words of *Christ* allude to *Jonah* (ii. 5) *in the heart of the waters*, which the LXX. render καρδιας θαλασσης. (*Grotius*) So ‘the heart of the heaven,’ *Deut.* iv. 11; ‘the heart of the sea,’ *Ps. xlv. 2.*” *Wakefield*, p. 181.

were well apprized of his intended resurrection at the time of his death; though his own disciples, who could never entertain the idea of his actual death, and consequently not that of his literal resurrection, had no such expectation.

42. This may look like vanity in Jesus. But no person can be justly blamed for entertaining a *just* idea of his own character and worth. Without this no person, whether he speaks of it or not, which can make no real difference, can act up to his character. Besides, it was, on several accounts, proper that the enemies of Jesus should be fully apprized of his dignity, that they might reject him at their great peril, and not be able to say that they knew not who he was, or what risk they ran in rejecting him.

Jesus was far from assuming any praise to himself, but always ascribed every thing that was extraordinary in him to his Father. He said, repeatedly, *I can of my ownself do nothing. The Father within me he doth the works. I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* He exacted no servile attendance from his followers. On the contrary, he said that *he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*; and he required of his followers the same humble demeanour of which he gave a pattern in himself. This, however, is a mark of the greatest real dignity, calculated to inspire us both with veneration and with love.

43. By this parable of *the unclean spirit*, which, according to the vulgar notion, frequented barren and desert places, our Lord describes the wretched depravity of the Jewish nation, which had been much corrupted before the Babylonish Captivity, had been reformed by that calamity, but afterwards sunk into greater wickedness than ever, for which they were doomed to severer punishments, and of longer continuance, than those they had suffered before.\*

46—50. This conduct of our Lord by no means betrays any want of proper respect for *his mother and brethren*. But being now employed in an office of the highest dignity, which respected the whole human race, they did wrong to interrupt him. However, instead of reproving them, he only took that opportunity of delivering a most noble sentiment, with peculiar emphasis, expressing his undistinguishing regard to all his disciples and followers.† Or perhaps, without intending any *reproof*, he might only lay hold of

\* See Lardner, I. pp. 490, 491; Farmer (on Demon.), Ch. ii. Sect. iii. pp. 200, 201, Note; Wakefield, p. 183; "Matt. xii. 43—45, paraphrased" by Eusebius, (Mr. Garnham,) Theol. Repos. V. pp. 274, 275.

† See Lardner, III. p. 483.



the incident for the sake of introducing his excellent observation.

By this speech, delivered in this public manner, Jesus would cut off all undue expectation of particular distinction or advantage to be enjoyed in his kingdom, on account of any natural relationship to him. And it was very wise and proper that the relations of Jesus should be fully apprized of this.

### SECTION XXXI.

*The Parables of the Sower of the Tares, of the Grain of Mustard-seed, and of the Leaven.*

*Matt.* xiii. 1—35; *Mark* iv. 1—20, 25—34; *Luke* viii. 1—18; xiii. 18—22.

THE method of conveying instruction by means of *parables*, or feigned stories, is very ancient, and has been more particularly used in the East. There are some examples of it in the Old Testament. But no teacher ever made so much use of parables as Jesus, though hitherto he has not had much recourse to them. In his discourse on the Mount he made use of many striking *comparisons*, to illustrate and enforce his meaning; but the only proper parable we have hitherto met with is that of the unclean spirit, in the preceding Section, by which he intended to express the character and fate of the Jewish nation in general. He did not, however, make the application himself, and it would not probably occur to any of his hearers, or be understood, till it was reflected upon afterwards. This, indeed, seems to have been the intention of Jesus in most, if not all, his parables. He did not expect, or wish, to be understood at the time, but to give his hearers something to reflect upon, and make out afterwards, when in consequence of its having been some time unintelligible to them, and been the subject of their thoughts and conversation, it would make the deeper impression.

In this *Section* we have some *parables*, with respect to which Jesus avowed that he did not intend to be understood by the bulk of his audience: for, as appeared by the malicious construction that had just before been put upon his conduct by the Pharisees, who said that he cast out demons by *Beelzebub*, they were not likely to have profited by plainer instructions, of which indeed Jesus had not been sparing.

The parables in this Section are prophetical, prefiguring

the reception that the gospel would meet with from persons of different characters, and for this reason they could not be understood by the hearers. That our Lord did not intend to be understood by them, he himself acknowledges, (*Matt.* xiii. 11,) and in his application of the prophecy of *Isaiah*, [vi. 9] who foretold the obstinacy and incredulity of this generation. Our Lord shewed all possible condescension to those who came to him with a good disposition, but he very justly and prudently behaved in a different manner to the captious and worldly-minded, or to persons under the influence of any other bad disposition.

*Matt.* xiii. 2. Sitting, but in an elevated place, was always the posture of a Jewish teacher; so that when Jesus sat down, it was an intimation that he was going to speak, as standing up would be with us. The latter, however, is certainly more favourable to speaking loud, and I would observe that Jesus must have exerted great strength of voice to have made himself distinctly heard by a multitude, such as generally crowded after him, from a ship; as, in the calmest weather, at least in our seas, the rolling of the waves to the shore makes a considerable noise; though in that small and inland sea, or lake, it might not be so great, and a gentle breeze from the water would greatly assist the voice. It is probable, however, that Jesus never spake long at any time. He made no long speeches, but generally delivered himself in short sentences, or parables of no great length, and he might do this with considerable pauses.

9. What immediately follows, appears, from the circumstances, and the account of the other evangelists, to have been delivered to the disciples in the absence of the multitude afterwards, though in *Matthew* the account is uninterrupted, for the sake of introducing the observations with more advantage in other respects. *Mark* says, that this conversation passed when he was alone with the disciples. *Ch.* iv. 10: "When he was alone, they who were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable."

13. Here Jesus avows his speaking *in parables*, on purpose to conceal his meaning from the multitude; but it was because they would not have received any benefit from plainer discourse. What he foresaw would have been lost upon them, he did not choose to impart. Some of them, however, might be struck with the parable, and reflect upon it with advantage afterwards, especially when they saw it exemplified in the preaching of the apostles.

15. Jesus here quotes *Isaiah* vi. 9, 10, which is evidently



descriptive of the Jews in the time of the prophet. But because it was equally true of the Jews in our Saviour's time, he says it was *fulfilled* in them; by which, however, he could only mean that it was applicable to them. The meaning of the passage is obvious, which is, that they were so violently prejudiced against the truth, and against all reformation, that no natural means of conviction or instruction would have any effect upon them.\* And this is a state of mind that is by no means peculiar to Jews. We see too much of it every day among ourselves, and **not** only in what relates to morals, but the common conduct of life. How many persons are there who, as we usually say, *will hear no reason*, how plainly or mildly soever it be proposed to them!

17. † How justly may we apply this to ourselves, even more than the apostles could at the time that Jesus addressed this discourse to them: for at that time they saw and understood very little; whereas we see every important subject clearly; the great doctrines of the gospel, and the great end of it, in a state of future retribution, being fully revealed to us! Happy, indeed, will it be, if our conduct be answerable to the light we enjoy; but aggravated will be our condemnation, if it appear that we love darkness rather than this glorious light, because our deeds are evil.

19. By *the evil one* may be understood any thing that is, or that tends to, evil, especially bad habits, and prejudices, which prevent any good impression from the clearest instructions.‡

21. Here Jesus describes the case of those who are so far free from bad habits and dispositions, as to receive instruction very readily, but are not able to bear persecution. They see and acknowledge what is their duty, but the love of life is stronger in them than the love of truth. Times of persecution always discover great numbers to be in this state.§

22. These are those who, without persecution, by the influence of the love of riches, and other worldly pursuits, abandon that faith and hope which they had acquired; and of these we have examples at all times; and on this account it greatly behoves us, especially such as are engaged in business, as well as such as have no necessary employment, to be upon our guard. Much more real danger arises in

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 483—488; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 218—225; *Wakefield*, pp. 193, 194.

† “To the same purpose, says *Maimonides*, ‘Prophets have wished for the days of the *Messiah*, and excellent men have eagerly expected them.’ (*Port. Mos.* p. 160).” *Ibid.* p. 194.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 195.

§ *Ibid.*

these circumstances than in those of open persecution. If adversity, as is often said, slays its thousands, prosperity slays its ten thousands.

All must class with those who receive the good seed among thorns, with whom the fear and love of God, and a regard to the precepts and promises of the gospel, are not a *primary* object, having a real preference to any other, so that, if they were called to it, they would abandon every thing for them. Let us, then, ask our hearts whether we could do this, or whether we do not suspect that the love of the world and the things in it would prevent it.

23. This description of men requires no explanation. I shall only observe that, of those who properly receive the gospel, and who will be entitled to the rewards of it, there are various degrees. All are not equally distinguished by their regard for religion and virtue here, nor will they be so by their happiness hereafter.

24. \* Jesus, in that part of his history to which our attention is now called, proceeds to deliver more parables, descriptive of the reception which the gospel would meet with in the world. When we consider that the term by which he here denotes the gospel was *the kingdom of God*, or *the kingdom of heaven*, and the ideas that the Jews had of that kingdom, we shall not wonder that what he said should have been utterly unintelligible to his hearers. This kingdom, which they imagined to be the reign of *a prince of the house of David*, over the Jewish nation, and the whole world, they might suppose to arise and extend itself gradually; but how it could be compared to seed sown in the ground, some of it falling on the highway, some upon stony ground, some among thorns, and some on good ground, they could not possibly comprehend. And as little could they understand the parable of *the tares of the field*, which I now proceed to recite.

25. *Tares*. Ζιζάνια does not here mean a kind of pulse, but some noxious weed.

26—30. In the former parable Jesus had represented some of the seed of the word as falling among thorns, which prevented its taking root to any purpose. In this he speaks of noxious weeds growing up along with the seed; but, as far as appears, not preventing its growth, but only occupying so much of the ground into which the good plants might

\* "Rather *hath been likened*. From whence it seems probable, that Jesus, in this place, on Ch. xviii. 23, xxii. 3, made no new parables, but only quoted, and applied to his purpose, old ones, and such as the Scribes of those days had used." Pearce, 1. p. 95.



have extended themselves. This, therefore, is not a farther illustration of any thing contained in the former parable, but informs us that along with the pure gospel, something would spread in the world of an opposite nature, no more resembling it than tares, or noxious weeds, resemble wheat; but they will both occupy the same ground, and will continue to do so to the end of the world.\*

The two next parables are prophetic of the extensive spread of the Gospel, which, though making no great appearance at first, would in time fill the whole earth.

32. *The greatest of herbs.* The mustard is a large plant in the East. The *Talmud* mentions one that a man might sit in with ease.†

34. At the time that Jesus delivered these *parables*, there was no appearance of the prophecies they contain being fulfilled. The Gospel was hardly begun to be preached, not one of the disciples of Jesus had at that time any knowledge of the nature of it; and yet by their means a system of religion quite different from any thing that was ever known before, was to be preached, and to overturn every species of false religion, which the institutions of Moses (which, indeed, had a different object) had not effected, and would at length, by its own evidence, establish itself in all parts of the world. We see, however, this wonderful prophecy in a great measure fulfilled already, so that we cannot entertain any doubt of the accomplishment of it in all its extent in due time, when, in the language of the prophets, *the kingdom of this world will be the kingdom of Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.*

35. By *the prophet* is here meant *David* or *Asaph*, for it is a quotation from *Psalms* lxxviii. 2, and a passage actually delivered by the Psalmist in his own name, without any view to future times. Here, then, we have another clear instance of the use of the term *fulfilled*, as synonymous to *applied*; ‡ for Jesus could not mean any thing more than

\* "This *parable* is extremely applicable to the case of religious persecution, and shews that all the iniquitous oppressors of the conscience, and all the accursed tormentors of the bodies of mankind, on account of religious faith, not only act in defiance of the plainest principles of equity, (see *Chap.* vii. 12,) and in contempt of the *free spirit* of the Gospel, but in direct opposition also to the example of Almighty God; and usurp that high prerogative, the distribution of justice, which he has reserved for himself, and will finally exercise on all mankind by the hands of his Son Jesus, at the day of judgment." *Wakefield*, p. 197.

† See *Doddridge*. (Sect. lxxviii.) (*P.*) See Sir T. Brown's *Tracts*, I. Sect. xxiii.; *Lightfoot* in *Wakefield*, p. 197.

‡ "So that what the prophet said, may be applied to what Jesus did." *Pearce*, 1. p. 96. See, on *Matt.* xxiii. 35, *Luke* xi. 50, *ibid.* pp. 158, 376. "This quotation

that what the Psalmist said with respect to himself, he could also adopt in his own case. In general, however, there cannot be any doubt but that by the term *fulfilled*, the writers of the New Testament meant that there was an intended reference in the passages they quote to their own times.

## SECTION XXXII.

*The Explanation of the Parable of the Tares, the Parables of the Treasure hid in a Field, of a Merchant seeking Pearls, and of a Net; and the Reception of Jesus at Nazareth.*

*Matt.* xiii. 36—58; *Mark* vi. 1—6; *Luke* iv. 16—30.

**MATT.** xiii. 38.\* We see here that by *tares* is not to be understood any spurious kind of Christianity, which shall resemble it, though it may be so applied, but *bad men*, which the world will continue to produce as well as good.

43. According to this parable, we are not to expect a complete separation of good and bad men until the end of the world, the day of judgment, or the last resurrection. This world is always to be a state of trial and discipline; so that whatever be meant by the *millenium*, or the reign of Christ upon earth, it will not be a state resembling what we are taught concerning heaven, or that which succeeds the resurrection of all the dead. Indeed, so long as men marry and have offspring, the children must be produced as they are now, in an imperfect state, exposed to temptation, and liable to vice; though in a more improved state of things, methods may be adopted to counteract their effects better than we are able to do at present. There will, no doubt, be a greater extension of the knowledge of the Gospel, and probably an universal profession of it through all the world. But still there will always be *tares* as well as *wheat*, though we may not be able to say whence they will arise. Good principles are taught openly, but the introduction and influence of bad principles is often secret and silent, like these tares, which were sown *in the night, while men slept*. This will apply to the case of principles mani-

appears to have been set down by the *evangelist* from memory, for it neither agrees with the *original*, nor the LXX. As a *prophecy*, it is most evidently employed here in a *popular* and *accommodated* application only." Wakefield, pp. 197, 198.

\* "Rather 'the good seed are *these*, the children of the kingdom.' Perhaps Jesus pointed then to his disciples." Pearce, I. p. 97. See Wakefield, p. 198.



festly bad, and known to be incompatible with the Gospel, but much more to principles of a doubtful nature, maintained by their proposers to be agreeable to the Gospel.

This parable affords a clear and striking lesson against all persecution. Both the tares and the wheat are to *grow together till the harvest*. No violence is to be used to extirpate the tares, lest some injury be done to the wheat. The course of nature must be left to itself. But what men cannot, and should not attempt to do here, will be done hereafter. Let us then see that we be of *the good seed* in this parable, and *the good ground* in the preceding, receiving the truth of the Gospel, firmly retaining it, and especially acting upon it.

It is evident from this parable, as well as from the whole tenor of Scripture, that there will be no reward of the righteous, or punishment of the wicked, till the general judgment; for we are here told that *the harvest is the end of the world*, and that *the Son of Man*, at his second coming, will *send forth his angels to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity*, and that *then*, and not before, he will order them to be *cast into the furnace of fire*, and that *then*, and not before, *the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.<sup>\*</sup> All our hopes and fears, therefore, should respect that *great day*, emphatically called *that day*.

55. *And his brethren*. They were probably his *cousins*, the children of *Cleopas*, the brother of *Joseph*, and of another *Mary*, his wife.<sup>†</sup>

57. *Is not without honour*.<sup>‡</sup> This seems to be another case of Hebrew comparison. Jesus, in fact, was ill-treated elsewhere, and therefore it might be translated, *Is no where less esteemed than in his own country*.

58. *Because of their unbelief*, i. e. because they were not disposed to be properly impressed by them, i. e. to admit them as evidence of his divine mission, but would put some other construction upon them.

*Mark vi. 5*. This may be rendered, *he thought not proper*.<sup>§</sup>

Hitherto Jesus kept at a distance from *Nazareth*, the place, as I think, of his birth, and that, as all allow, where he was brought up from his earliest years. This place he seems purposely to have avoided, on his first arrival in

<sup>\*</sup> See *Dan. xii. 3*.

<sup>†</sup> See *Pearce*, I. p. 99; *Wakefield*, p. 202.

<sup>‡</sup> "This observation seems to have been a proverbial saying, of which kind there were many among the Jews." *Ibid*.

<sup>§</sup> *Wakefield*. (P.) See his *Notes*, p. 31; *Pearce*, I. p. 231.

Galilee, after the descent of the Spirit upon him, for a reason which we shall see abundantly justified on the present occasion, viz. that a prophet is but little esteemed in his own country. The reason is, that people having seen much of a person in very early life, and having known many childish things concerning him, the idea of them is so connected with that of his person, that they are never after entirely separated. Having long known him to be not at all superior to themselves, they cannot readily think more highly of him than of themselves, and therefore require very strong evidence of his superior endowments; or if there be an evident superiority, it excites jealousy and envy, rather than reverence.

Jesus being conscious to himself that he would be exposed to this treatment, is a proof that whatever intimation he might have had, in his early years, of his high destination, he had not assumed any thing in consequence of it, so as to have kept himself at a distance from persons of equal condition with himself, or to have behaved with any reserve towards them; for had he never behaved with any familiarity among them who were his equals by birth, the idea which led them to make light of him would never have taken place in their minds. We may conclude, therefore, from the treatment that Jesus met with at Nazareth, that he had not been distinguished from men in his own rank of life in his ordinary behaviour; so that they who had played with him when he was a boy, and saw nothing extraordinary in him at that time, would not soon persuade themselves that any thing extraordinary had come to him afterwards.

This is an argument either that he had no early communications concerning his great future destination, or that he had very carefully concealed them, which gives us a high idea of his modesty and self-command; though the knowledge that was, no doubt, at the same time communicated to him concerning his future sufferings, would tend to prevent that undue elation of mind, which otherwise would have been the necessary consequence of his being informed that he was to arrive at a state of much greater dignity and power, than that of any other man.

*Luke* iv. 16. It was not so much the custom in the Jewish synagogue for any particular person to read the Scriptures, but that others might also do it. As young men, however, were not excluded from this office, which required nothing but decent behaviour and a good voice,



it is possible that Jesus might have been used to this duty sometime before in the same synagogue. To this day the Jews stand up when the Scriptures are read, out of reverence to them.

17. We see here that it was not the *Pentateuch*, or the five books of Moses only, that was read by the Jews in their synagogues, but probably all the other books of the Scripture, which have got the appellation of *canonical*, as those of their books which were not read in the synagogues, we now call *apocryphal*, which therefore does not imply any censure, except that they were considered as not written by prophets.

18. *Because he hath anointed me.* “Prideaux says that the Greek words here do not exactly agree either with the Hebrew original or with the version of the LXX. in *Isaiah* lxi. 1, 2, and that therefore it seems most likely that they were read out of some *Chaldee Targum*, which was made use of in that synagogue.”\*

*Deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind.* It is too much the custom in the East to put out the eyes of captives and prisoners.

19. *The acceptable year of the Lord.* Alluding to the year of *Jubilee*, among the Jews, when all debts were cancelled and every person restored to the inheritance of his ancestors.

20. *Opened the book, ἀναπτύξας, and closed, πτύξας,* that is, when he had unfolded, and then folded it; the books of the ancients being written on long rolls of cloth, or parchment.

I have observed that sitting was the usual posture of teachers among the Jews; so that Jesus sitting down after he had read, like his taking a seat on the mountain, and in the ship, was an intimation that he was going to speak, in consequence of which they were all attentive to what he was about to say. When Jesus gave an account of himself before the Jewish Sanhedrim, he said, [*Matt.* xxvi. 55,] “I sat daily in the Temple teaching.”

21. We cannot infer from this that the passage which our Lord quoted (which was *Isaiah* lxi. 1), had any original reference to his ministry; for we have just seen that he used the same phrase in quoting another passage, in which the prophet evidently spoke concerning the people of his own time: so here it is sufficient if Jesus could in any proper sense adopt the words of the prophet, and apply

them to himself and his own circumstances. What *Isaiah* here says relates to the future state of the Jews, when they should be restored to their own country, which, as the prophet says, would be glad tidings to the meek. He goes on to say, that "they would build the old waste places, and raise up the former desolations, that they would repair the waste, the desolation of many generations;" which is most evidently descriptive of what is to take place at a future period. This Jesus applied in a figurative sense to the preaching of the Gospel by himself and his disciples, this being a joyful or acceptable time, as well as the other that was yet to come.\*

22. From this it appears that Jesus delivered himself in a manner much superior to what was expected from him. The word signifies in a *graceful*, or pleasing manner, not that he ever studied eloquence, but that the manner of speaking, which is dictated by real affection and earnestness, which his good-will to his hearers would naturally inspire, would have greater effect than the most studied modes of address.

From the offence that was taken at this discourse,† it is probable that Jesus had enlarged on the importance of his character and commission, as he had done on a former occasion, when he called himself *one greater than Jonas*, and even *than Solomon*; and in this, as I have observed, there was great propriety and nothing of ostentation or vanity; and he might more naturally enlarge upon this subject in his own city, where the people would be apt to despise him, though when taken amiss, it would naturally enough provoke them, and cause them to reflect on the meanness of his descent, and every other circumstance that would tend to bring him upon a level at least with themselves, if not place him below them.

Upon this occasion we see that the people of Nazareth call Jesus *the son of Joseph*. It is evident, therefore, that the people of the place where he lived had never heard of his miraculous birth. If they had, ill-disposed as they were towards him, they would not have spared such reflections on himself and his mother as the unbelieving Jews have always had recourse to, with respect to it. But I do not enlarge upon this subject, as my opinion, and the reasons

\* See the Author, on *vers.* 16—21, *Theol. Repos.* V. pp. 111—116.

† "Their wonder seems to have been, not the effect of approbation, but of dislike; and if so, they could only *bear him witness*, by marking his words with a view to give them in evidence against him." *Pearce*, l. p. 327.



of it, may be found in my writings. In what manner soever Jesus came into the world, he was *sent by God*, he came with his commission, and it is *this* that we are to respect.

26, 27. *Elias* is Elijah; and *Eliseus*, Elisha.

29. *Brow of the hill*. "Nazareth," says *Maundrell*, "is situated in a kind of round concave valley, on the top of a high hill."\*

We see here, as we may at this day, that when men's minds are irritated, every thing that can be urged in favour of truths, especially if it imply any reproaches, as what Jesus said on this occasion evidently did, only exasperates. It does not appear that the people of this place doubted Jesus's power of working miracles, but he did not choose to work any, at least not many (for one of the evangelists [*Mark* vi. 5] says, *he laid his hands on a few sick persons and healed them*) in that town or neighbourhood, which they would naturally think he ought to have preferred to any other, though he had the best reasons for not doing it; and because he said nothing that was flattering or soothing to them, and rather reproached them for want of due respect to him they were so much offended, that they even attempted his life.

30. Perhaps in the confusion in which they were, Jesus might make his escape without exerting any miraculous power, which we may assure ourselves he would not do unnecessarily, especially in his own favour.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Luke* iv. (23, &c.). You are not pleased that I do not here such mighty works as you have heard that I performed at Capernaum and other places, and are applying to me the old proverb, *Physician, heal thyself*. Serve yourselves and your friends, you say, in the first place: but I am well aware that this would answer no good purpose. Your having known me from my infancy prejudices you so strongly against my having any pretensions superior to those of other men, as will effectually prevent your being impressed by

\* *Journey*, p. 112. "We made another small excursion, in order to see that which they call *the Mountain of Precipitation*.—This precipice is at least half a league distant from Nazareth, southward. In going to it, you cross, first, over the vale in which Nazareth stands; and then going down two or three furlongs in a narrow cleft between the rocks, you there clamber up a short but difficult way, on the right hand; at the top of which you find a great stone, standing on the brink of a precipice, which is said to be the very place where our Lord was destined to be thrown down by his enraged neighbours." *Ibid.* p. 116.

my miracles as you ought to be. And indeed it is true in general, that a prophet is seldom much esteemed in his own country: but it is no new thing, in the dispensations of Providence, that prophets should be directed to bestow on strangers the favours of which their own countrymen were unworthy. This was remarkably the case in the time of Elijah and Elisha.

### SECTION XXXIII.

*The Mission of the Twelve Apostles, and their Instructions.*

*Matt.* ix. 35—38; x. 1—42; *Mark* vi. 7—13; *Luke* ix. 1—6; xii. 1—9, 11, 12, 49—53.

*MATT.* ix. 35. Upon Jesus being rejected at *Nazareth*, we do not read of any attempt that he afterwards made to preach in that place. The time of his public ministry was very short, and therefore he left that city, and preached in other neighbouring towns, in the western part of Galilee, where he had not been before, and where we shall find him attended by as great crowds as had followed him at *Capernaum* and other cities in the eastern part of this country.

36. We have here another instance of the affectionate temper of Jesus: he could not see the multitude which crowded after him, and whom, being alone, he was not able fully to instruct, without visible marks of compassion, so that the idea of sheep wandering without a shepherd naturally occurred to his mind;\* and this situation of things seems to have suggested to him the expedient of sending out his twelve apostles, who were now sufficiently instructed for the purpose, to go and preach in those places where he could not be present himself.

x. 1. The apostles had the very same power that Jesus himself was possessed of. This resembles the case of Moses, of whom we read, *Deut.* xxxiv. 9, that he “laid his hands upon Joshua, and that he was full of the spirit of wisdom;” and, indeed, by the laying on of the hands of the apostles themselves, the Holy Spirit was given to their disciples. This circumstance, therefore, implies no divine power in Jesus, any more than it did in Moses or the apostles; but the same power that God had imparted to Jesus, he authorized Jesus to impart to the apostles. This agrees with what

\* See *Pearce*, l. p. 63; *Wakefield*, p. 133.



Our Lord says in his prayer, [*John* xvii. 18,] “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” For sending them out with this commission was sending them *into the world*, not out of another world into this, but into more public life, to act a distinguished part on the great theatre of the world.

6. To leave the Jews without excuse, by not unnecessarily hurting their prejudice, it pleased God that the commission of Jesus himself should be confined to the Jews, as was also that of the apostles for about ten years after the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus, however, gave sufficient intimation of his design to bring other sheep into his fold, by preaching in one of the towns of Samaria, and by exerting his miraculous powers in favour of a woman of Canaan.

7. It is observable that the twelve apostles were not, upon this mission, to publish that Jesus was the *Messiah*, probably lest it should give alarm to the Jews or Romans. The burden of their preaching was only that *the kingdom of God was at hand*.

It was not, however, that kingdom of God which the Jews were looking for, and in which they supposed the Messiah would preside. This kingdom of God does not properly commence till the resurrection, and the day of judgment, when Christ will come as a king, in *the clouds of heaven*, with power and great glory, as he is described in the prophecy of *Daniel*, [vii. 13]. What takes place in this world by the preaching of the gospel, is only something preparatory to this. It is forming proper subjects for this kingdom, and in this sense our Lord's kingdom may be said to take place in this world; but it is not its original and proper sense.

8. The clause *raise the dead* is not in all MSS.; and because we have no account of any person being raised from the dead by the apostles, during this particular mission, it has been supposed by some that *Matthew* did not write this clause.\* But if the whole of this discourse be considered, it will be found that several parts of it relate to the general mission of the apostles, after the ascension of Jesus; and as this evangelist chose to introduce in the sermon on the Mount the substance of all Our Lord's moral instructions, so in this he seems to have introduced every thing that he could recollect of the instructions and advice that Jesus had at any time given the apostles with respect to their conduct in

\* It “is omitted in a multitude of Greek MSS., and probably it never came from Matthew's pen.” *Pearce*, l. p. 65; *Wakefield*, p. 137. The clause is in brackets, N. T. 1729, p. 33. See *Impr. Vers.* p. 21.

preaching the gospel, even after his death: for certainly they were not before that time brought before magistrates, or exposed to any kind of persecution, of which their Master here apprizes them.

By *freely ye have received, freely give*, we are to understand that the apostles were to be as liberal of their instructions, or of any benefit which by their miraculous power they could confer upon any person, as Jesus himself had been; freely imparting them to all that could receive benefit from them. These words were by no means intended to assert, what the *Quakers* have supposed them to do, viz. that the ministers of the gospel should receive no compensation for their labours.\* Jesus himself was maintained by the voluntary contributions of his friends. Immediately after this, he says, that *the workman is worthy of his meat*, and the apostle *Paul* expressly says, [1 Cor. ix. 14,] that "they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel."

This, indeed, is no more than one case in many which come under this general rule, viz. that persons employed by others, for whatever service, should receive an equivalent for their time and labour, and of course be indemnified for the expense of whatever education it may have been requisite to qualify them for their office. It is evident, that the ministers of the gospel are in this respect in the same situation with physicians, and others who give their time to any particular profession, who are in fact the servants of those by whom they are employed.

If any, like the apostle Paul, be by any means independent of their salaries as ministers, and voluntarily give their time and labour to what they deem to be the cause of truth and of virtue, those to whose benefit they thus devote their labours, are under the same obligation to them as they would be to a physician who would give them his advice *gratis*. And the recompence that such persons do not expect from men, they will, no doubt, receive *at the resurrection of the just*, when *they who shall have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*.

9. *Girdles*. The people of the East carry their money in a fold of their girdles.†

\* This is not correct, according to *Barelay*. He says, "we freely acknowledge that there is an obligation upon such to whom God sends, or among whom he raiseth up a *minister*, that, if need be, they minister to his necessities," and "that it is lawful for him to receive what is necessary and convenient." He objects, indeed, from this text, to those "*preachers*, as well among *Papists* as *Protestants*, who will not preach to any, unless they be first sure of so much a year." *Apology*, (Prop. x. Sect. xxvii.) Ed. 8, 1780, pp. 328—330. See *Wakefield*, p. 138.

† Thus "*Zona* is frequently used by Roman authors." *Ibid*.



10. *Neither two coats, neither shoes, neither staves*;\* that is, no change of any of these things, or nothing more than was necessary for immediate use; which agrees with the charge in *Mark* [vi. 8], when they were allowed to have *a staff*.

11. *Inquire who in it is worthy*, i. e. with whom it will be most convenient for you to lodge, on account of their liberal turn of mind, or their good character.

This reliance upon Divine Providence, without any care of their own, was, no doubt, recommended to the apostles only, whose commission was of an extraordinary nature. Besides, as their whole time was taken up in travelling from place to place, and in preaching, they could have no opportunity of making any provision for their subsistence. *Paul*, however, when he had resided some time at *Corinth*, had recourse to his trade of a tent maker, and supported himself by that means. [*Acts* xviii. 3.] In the present ordinary course of things, all persons, ministers as well as others, should provide for their subsistence in some respectable manner; and if the proper duties of their office will not enable them to do this, they should join with it some other employment, and if possible such as may be nearly connected with their proper employment, especially that of the instruction of youth.

They were to inquire who was most likely to be benefited by their instructions, and to receive them with the respect to which they were entitled, viz. the teachable and liberal; because it could answer no end to apply to others. We are not to cast pearls before swine. On this occasion, the apostles were not to go from house to house, as if in quest of better or more various entertainment, but be content with a decent provision wherever they should meet with it.

15.† All who hear the preaching of the gospel enjoy greater moral advantages than the inhabitants of *Sodom and Gomorrah* could derive from the discourses or example of *Lot*; and on that account their guilt in refusing admonition must be greater, and their future condemnation proportionably heavier.

16.‡ Jesus having instructed his apostles what to say and what to do on this mission, and how they were to equip themselves for it, proceeds to give them farther instructions

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 20, 571; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 11, 236, 237; *Pearce*, I. p. 66; *Salmasius* on *Tertullian de Pallio*, in *Wakefield*, pp. 138, 139.

† *The day of judgment*, "the day of the destruction of the Jewish state, called the coming of the Son of Man, ver. 23." *Pearce*, I. p. 67, "A day of trial, calamity, or visitation." See 1 *Peter* xi. 12; *Wakefield*, p. 140.

‡ See *ibid*.

how to conduct themselves with respect to the difficulties to which they would be exposed : but it is very easy to perceive that the difficulties here mentioned were not likely to occur in this short excursion, and therefore must relate to a future period.\*

18. † The apostles certainly were not brought before any *governors* or *kings* on this short mission.

20. ‡ If we consider the actual behaviour of the apostles when they were brought before courts of justice, we shall see no reason to imagine that they were inspired by any thing more than a consciousness of their innocence, and the goodness of the cause in which they were engaged. *Paul* on one occasion expressed himself with a degree of warmth for which he thought proper to make an apology, saying, that he did not know that the person before whom he spoke was the high-priest. This, therefore, could not be the behaviour of a man under proper divine inspiration. § Probably, therefore, all that our Lord intended was, that his disciples did not need to distress themselves at the apprehension of being brought before the most awful tribunals, (which, considering the low birth and education of most of them, might naturally inspire them with terror,) for that when their trial came, they would find themselves at no loss how to conduct themselves ; since the cause in which they were engaged, which was of God, would not fail to suggest to them what they should say. All prophecies are best interpreted by the events ; and if we find less in the event than in the prediction, we make Jesus a false prophet.

22. How different was this from the expectations with which the apostles became the followers of Jesus ! They thought that he would soon be a king, and that he would lead them to conquest and triumph, and not to death. It is probable, therefore, that had he delivered this doctrine in so early a period of his ministry as Matthew here places it, they would have revolted at it, and therefore that this part

\* "Almost every thing in this following part of Jesus's speech, seems to shew that it was not spoken till a little before his crucifixion, where *Mark* (xiii. 9) and *Luke* (xxi. 12, &c.) seem more justly to have placed it." *Pearce*, l. p. 67.

† "These predictions of our Lord are justly alleged by *Origen*, (*Cont. Cels.* l. ii. p. 67, *Ed. Cant.*) as striking proofs of his *prescience*. Who could have thought, at that time, that these *despised* and *illiterate* men could excite so much attention, and be called upon to apologise for the profession of their faith, before the tribunals of the most illustrious personages in the earth ?" *Wakefield*, p. 141.

‡ "It is not ye *only* that speak." *Pilkington*, p. 112. See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 117 ; *Pearce*, l. p. 68 ; *Wakefield*, p. 141.

§ See the Author's *Essays on Inspiration*, No. III. in *Theol. Repos.* IV. pp. 196—198 ; *Le Clerc's Five Letters*, (No. I.) 1690, pp. 41—51 ; *Lowth's Vindication*, (*Ch. ii.*) 1692, pp. 73—88.



of the discourse was not delivered on this particular occasion, but later in the history. We cannot help observing here, how exact was our Lord's foreknowledge of the reception which his doctrine would meet with in the world, and of the great evils of which it would be the innocent cause. But there is no great good in the whole course of nature, without some evil inseparable from it.

23. The duty of Christians is to avoid persecution, if it can be done innocently, as by avoiding a place where a person would be exposed to it: but it is the express condition on which we claim the rewards of Christianity, to adhere to the profession of it at the risk of every thing dear to us in life, and of life itself, if we be called to it, i. e. if there be no alternative besides confessing Christ before men, or denying him.

There is a great difficulty in this passage. *The coming of the Son of Man*, I cannot help thinking, is no other than his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world. But admitting he might be said *to come*, at the destruction of Jerusalem, as if he then took vengeance on his enemies, the apostles had certainly done much more than going through all *the cities of Israel*\* before that time, the whole country being of no greater extent in any direction than a person might walk through in about a week; and the destruction of Jerusalem did not happen till forty years after our Saviour's death. If Jesus did express himself in this manner, (but I would observe that it is only in one evangelist that the expression is found,) he must, as far as appears, have apprehended that his second coming was much nearer than it really was. This, however, is no great difficulty; since he himself acknowledged that the time of his second coming was known to *the Father only*,† and not to himself, so that he was left to his own conjectures on that subject.

25. ‡ In this, Jesus teaches his disciples not to complain of their sufferings as peculiarly hard, when their Master had been exposed to the same before them.

28. § There is no passage in Scripture, of the Old or New

\* "Before you shall have preached through all the cities of the Jews." N. T. 1729, pp. 34, 35. "Shall have finished, (Marg. *Eng. Trans.*) i. e. converted." Pearce, l. p. 68. See Wakefield, p. 142; *Impr. Vers.* p. 22.

† See *Matt.* xxv. 36; *Mark* xiii. 32; *Sect.* lxxiv.

‡ See Wakefield, pp. 142, 143.

§ "In this our Lord might express himself according to the philosophical principles that, perhaps, began about that time to spread among the Jews, as well as he did concerning possession by *demons*; or by ψυχῆν, which we render *soul*, he might mean no more than *life*, but the future and better life, in opposition to the present; God being able to put an end even to this, in the utter annihilation of the wicked.

Testament, that seems to teach the doctrine of a *soul*, as distinct from the body, more clearly than this does. And yet I am persuaded that Jesus had no such idea, as neither on this, nor any other occasion, does he intimate that these two supposed parts of man were separated, so that the soul could feel, or do any thing without the body, which, according to the common notion, it is certainly capable of.

As Jesus had probably heard nothing of the Heathen Philosophy, in which the doctrine of a soul is a distinguished article, we may suppose, that he alludes to the account which Moses gives of the creation of man; who first says, that God formed *man* (not his body only, but every thing that constitutes the man) *of the dust of the earth*, and that he then *breathed into him the breath of life*, that is, put all the parts into proper motion, by the power of *breathing*, so as to animate the senseless frame, the power of perception and thought being the necessary consequences of this *animation*; and as these powers came, they would, of course, cease with the powers of *breathing* or *life*. The term which is here rendered *soul*, is commonly rendered *life*. \* Thus when Jesus says, *Matt. vi. 25, "Take no thought for your life;"* if the same word had been rendered as it is here, it would have been *take no thought for your soul*; for in the original the words are the very same.

Consequently, what our Lord meant to say was, that God can not only punish a man in a state after this, but even deprive him of *life* or *existence* there; inflicting that punishment which is elsewhere called *the second death*, whereas the power of man extends to *the present life* only. † Agreeable to this doctrine, Christ says, that he gives to his disciples *eternal life*, and it is said *they shall die no more*.

It is observable, even here, that the only punishment of the soul that our Lord speaks of, is in company with the body: nothing is said of its existing in a state separate from the body. And it might very well be conceived, that the faculty of thinking belonged to something in man different from the rest of his body; and this might even be subdivided in idea, as into *soul* and *spirit*, as by Paul, and yet the whole be thought to be corporeal, inseparable, and consequently not capable of subsisting but in conjunction." *Harm. 1780, p. 86.*

\* See on this passage, Dr. Coward's *Second Thoughts*, Ed. 2, 1704, pp. 162—168. Mr. Layton says, "The expressions of St. Luke (xii. 4), give us some warrant to think that Christ did not deliver that doctrine in the words used by St. Matthew, but that he hath worded it according to his own conception and opinion; and that the doctrine of Christ, taken as delivered by St. Luke, is no more, but that men can only afflict and punish in this world, but God can do it both here and hereafter. And this all men must agree and assent unto." *Search after Souls*, printed 1706, p. 207. See Vol. II. pp. 354—356.

† See *Wakefield*, pp. 144—146. It is to be regretted that my friend never executed "A Dissertation on the *Immortality of the Soul*," which it appears that he had projected in 1732. See *ibid.* p. 145.



Whereas, though it is said that the wicked are to rise again as well as the righteous, it is not said that it is to a state in which they shall never die again. On this subject we are, no doubt very wisely, left in the dark. Our Saviour here asserts the power of God to deprive man of existence in a future state. Whether this power be executed or not, about which he does not determine, let us be careful we be not of those who will be exposed to it.

29\*—31.† Another topic of encouragement our Lord derives from the universal providence of God, which, no doubt, extends to the preachers of the gospel, especially such preachers as the apostles were. Nothing could befall them that was not intended by God, and therefore intended for the best; and in this it was their duty to acquiesce.

32, 33. Here, as I observed before, we see the condition, on which alone we can claim the rewards of the gospel. If we wish to *reign* with Christ, we must not decline to *suffer* with him, and for him, if at any time we be called to it; and it behoves us well to examine ourselves, and consider what we could be able to renounce, or to bear, in his cause.

If we consider the great prize for which we contend, that *life and immortality* are set before us, we cannot think that we can sacrifice too much to it, though we should be required to abandon life, and all the enjoyments of it. We are, in reality, no Christians, except *in name*, unless Christianity be the primary object with us, and every thing else be a secondary pursuit. And they who think they can give their time, their talents, and their heart to the world, and seldom think of any thing else, and yet imagine they may secure the happiness of heaven after all, will find that they miserably deceive themselves. This is the reason why our Lord says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,"‡ because riches naturally engage much of a man's thoughts, care and affection, and leave him little time to attend to better things. Indeed, the rich seldom think that there are any better things than riches, even though they never find themselves happy or satisfied with them; on the contrary, a true Christian will take more thought how to spend his wealth properly than to add to it. By this rule then let us try ourselves.

\* See *Le Cene*, p. 307; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 167, 168; *Wakefield*, pp. 146, 147.

† See *Bowyer*, p. 8; *Wakefield*, p. 147.

‡ *Matt.* xix. 24; *Mark* x. 25; *Luke* xviii. 25. See Sect. lxii.

34. \* *Think not that I am come to send peace.* Here our Lord foretells what would be the *actual consequence* of preaching his religion in the world, before the general reception of it, which would bring on a final state of peace and happiness.

36. † On this topic our Lord had spoken before, so that these instructions were delivered, or at least put down by the evangelist, without any strict regard to method: also what follows next, relates to what had been said a little before.

42. The ancients were fond of drinking their liquors warm. It was even the custom to sell warm water, so that a cup of cold water was the smallest of all favours. ‡

*Mark* vi. 8. In *Matt.* x. 10, the apostles are directed not to take even *staves*. The meaning seems to have been, that they were to go without any particular preparation. If they happened to have a *staff* in their hand, they were to proceed with it; if not, to go without one. §

13. *Anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.* It was an ancient *Hebrew* custom, says *Grotius*, both to lay hands upon, and anoint with oil, persons for whom prayers were made, by way of expressing their wishes that God would give them joy and gladness (denoted by oil), instead of affliction. This custom, as appears by *James* v. 14, || continued some time in the Christian church.

*Luke* xii. 49. *What will I, if it be already kindled?* *Pearce* would render it, "*What will I? I wish that it were already kindled*"; i. e. It is my desire and wish, that my doctrine had already taken place, though attended with this disagreeable circumstance." ¶

50. *I have a baptism to be baptized with.* Alluding to his death, in which he was, as it were, to be plunged. This metaphorical expression frequently occurs in the New Testament.

\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 147, 148.

† See *Micah* vii. 6, Vol. XII. p. 376.

‡ *Martin.* (P.) See *Wakefield*, p. 150.

§ See *Bowyer*, p. 22.

|| See *Notes*, Vol. XIV. in loc.

¶ *Com.* I. p. 383. (P.) See *Bowyer*, p. 42. *Impr. Vers.* p. 170. "I came to put fire in the earth; and what wish I more, since it is already kindled?" *Wakefield.* "Our Lord intends to signify the accomplishment of one great object of his mission; viz. the promulgation of a more perfect scheme of religious duty; as, in the next verse, he adverts to the other great object, his baptism of death. See *John* xvii. 4, and compare *Malachi* iii. 2. A passage in *Homer*—well illustrates that substitution of *εἰς* for *ἐν*, so common in the *New Testament*:

ΝΥΝ ΑΥΤ' ΕΝ ΝΗΟΙΣ ΜΕΒΑΣΙΝΕΤΕ ΠΟΝΤΟΠΟΡΙΣ  
ΠΤΡ ΘΛΟΟΝ ΒΑΛΕΕΙΝ.

*Iliad*, N. 628.

See *Silva Crit.* II. p. 36." *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 65; N. T. Ed. 2, 1795, I. p. 352.



## SECTION XXXIV.

*The Discourse concerning John, and the Upbraiding of Chorazin, &c.*

*Matt.* xi. 1—30; *Luke* vii. 18—35; x. 13—16; xvi. 16.

*MATT.* xi. 2. We now, for the first time after the election of the twelve apostles, find Jesus alone, they being gone upon their mission to the neighbouring towns of Galilee, where he himself could not conveniently attend; and here people of various descriptions resort to him as usual. But the most remarkable circumstance that here occurs, is a message from *John the Baptist*, who was then in prison, a very short time before his death.

3. It has generally been supposed, that John sent these messengers with some other view than to procure satisfaction for himself: but this supposition was only suggested by the idea, that John himself must necessarily have known that Jesus was the Messiah, to announce *this* having been, as they imagine, the special object of his mission. But the due consideration of this message, together with many other circumstances in the gospel history, satisfied Mr. Palmer\* that John himself was not apprized of the Messiahship of Jesus, but was only commissioned to signify that he was a greater prophet than himself; and as John denied that he was *Elias*, it is evident that he did not know that he sustained that character, and might possibly think that Jesus was the person. But hearing of the fame of his miracles, which led many others to suspect that he was nothing less than the *Messiah*, he himself appears to have begun to think the same; and for his own satisfaction, as well as that of others, he sent these messengers.† Here I would observe, that John's ignorance of the Messiahship of Jesus is a clear proof that they did not act in concert, and consequently an argument for the divine mission of them both.

\* In *Theol. Repos.* IV. pp. 168—179, 219—223.

† "John (I think) sent his disciples for his own information. Though he had acknowledged Jesus for the *Christ*, and pointed him out to the Jews for such, (*Ch.* iii. 11, 14, *Luke* iii. 15, 16, and *John* i. 26, &c.) yet he believed him to be only a temporal Saviour and Deliverer, (*ver.* 11). And now being in prison, a place unfit, as he thought, for the forerunner of the *Christ* to be left in, he began to be in doubt (to be *offended*, *ver.* 6), and to give way so far to dejection of spirit as to send his disciples to Jesus, for his greater satisfaction in this particular." *Pearce*, l. p. 72. See *Wakefield*, pp. 152—154.

5.\* It is remarkable that Jesus had not publicly acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, but left others to form their judgments from his works, and to these he contents himself with referring *John*. But to assist his judgment, he recapitulates his miracles, which John might compare with what was said, or supposed to be said, concerning the Messiah, by the ancient prophets, and he quotes several expressions which are to be found in *Isaiah*, particularly *Chap. xxxv. 5, 6*. But as no mention is there made of *the cleansing of lepers*, or of *raising the dead*, it is not probable that he meant to make an express quotation, of which, indeed, he gives no intimation.

Though the prophecies to which Jesus here refers are in many respects obscure, they clearly point out a glorious time to come, *a kingdom of righteousness*, under some distinguished person, appointed by God for that purpose. They use a language very unlike any of the Heathen writers, and this is the case not of *Isaiah* only, but of many other prophets, in a long succession. This remarkable difference is easily accounted for, on the supposition of these prophets having had divine communications, but not on any other hypothesis.

6. That is, Happy are they who can firmly believe that I am the *Messiah*, from comparing my works with the ancient prophecies, without being staggered by those circumstances in my appearance, which are generally supposed to be incompatible with that character, particularly my not assuming the title of a king.†

7—9. As John was a person who had drawn upon himself the favourable attention of almost the whole Jewish nation, Jesus took this opportunity, which he had not done before, of speaking concerning him and his character. He first suggests that they did not crowd after him into the Wilderness to see a common sight, such as reeds, which are in every desert place; nor yet such a person as they could not well expect to find there, as a courtier, such as are to be found in kings' houses. It was certainly, therefore, some person of a very great, but of a very different character, that they expected to find, viz. *a prophet*. This he now assures them that John was; and to raise their idea of him, he adds, *more than a prophet*, that is, a person whose commission was

\* See Wakefield, p. 154.

† "This was the obstacle at which *John* stumbled, or was scandalized." *Ibid.* p. 155.



of more consequence than that of most, if not any, of the preceding prophets;\* for we are not obliged by this declaration of Jesus to suppose that *John* was, in all respects, superior to *Moses*, *Elijah*, or the other of the more distinguished prophets of ancient time; for as he wrought no miracles, he was in this respect at least inferior to them.

10. To give the people a greater and juster idea of the character of John, Jesus informs them that he was the person intimated in the prophecy of *Malachi*, (iii. 1, 2,) "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare my way before me. And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who shall abide the day of his coming?" &c. Here the person who is simply styled *the Lord's messenger*, seems to be John the Baptist;† but *the Lord whom ye seek*, called also *the messenger of the covenant*, who was to come suddenly, or unexpectedly, is probably the *Messiah* himself. And it is farther probable that from this passage the Jews learned to characterize the Messiah by the title, *he who should come*; hence the phrase that John uses, *Art thou he that should come?*

11. Though *John*, as immediately preceding the Messiah, was a more important person than any of the preceding prophets, yet the disciples of *Christ* having more knowledge, and some of them communicating it with more effect, may be said to be *greater than he*; and that by *greater*, our Lord meant more powerful in making converts to truth and righteousness, seems to be evident from his illustration.‡

12. By the preaching of John great numbers were brought to be proper subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. This work is still going on, and so many subjects are now making, and as it were pressing into the kingdom of God, that it may be said to *suffer violence, or to be taken by force*.§

13. The dispensation of the law and the prophets may

\* See Wakefield, pp. 155, 156.

† Whom, according to *Cyril* and *Theophylact*, some Christians, misled by the equivocal word *angel*, believed to be a celestial spirit. See *Le Cene*, pp. 748—750.

‡ "The meaning is, the least among those of you who are believers in me, when ye shall be instructed in the true nature of my kingdom, shall have the preference before him who expects me to be only a temporal king." *Pearce*, I. p. 73. See Wakefield, p. 156.

§ "Rather gotten by force (as in *Marg. Eng. Trans.*). *Pearce*, I. p. 74. See Wakefield, p. 156. "Some suppose the meaning of this phrase to be, that the kingdom of heaven, that is, those who belong to it, are persecuted, harassed and oppressed." *Harm*. 1780, p. 90.

be said to have terminated at the appearance of *John*, who was invested with a new character, and with which commenced a new era in the dispensations of God to man.\*

14,† 15. As John did not know himself to be *Elias*, it is no wonder that the people did not receive him in that character, and therefore Jesus mentions it as a thing they would not receive without difficulty, saying, *and if ye will receive it*. To this he demands their more particular attention; for if John was *Elias*, he himself must, no doubt, be the *Messiah*. This, however, he did not choose expressly to declare, but left others to infer, though there was no difficulty in drawing the inference, but only admitting the premises, or the doctrine of John being *Elias*, and he is mentioned in that character, (*Malachi* iv. 5,) “Behold, I will send you *Elijah* the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

16, 17. Jesus here alludes to the custom of children, who in the East, and with us, and in all parts of the world, have plays in imitation of the actions of men;‡ and the customs of the Jews and other eastern nations at marriages and funerals are particularly remarkable, both being accompanied with instruments of music. The children here alluded to had mock ceremonies of this kind, and they are represented as complaining of their companions for not joining with them, so that whether they imitated a rejoicing or a mourning, they could not please them. The Jews were these children, finding fault both with the rigour of *John the Baptist*, and the more easy manners of *Jesus*.

18, 19. Having represented John and himself as both coming with the divine mission, he speaks of the unreasonable cavils of the Pharisees, who objected to them both for opposite reasons. John lived an austere life, and made his first appearance in a desert. They therefore said that he was a demoniac, or a person out of his right mind. Jesus, on the contrary, lived in society, and conformed to the innocent modes of it, and on that account they said that he was so far from being a prophet, that he was a *free liver*,§

\* See *Bowyer*, p. 8; *Wakefield*, p. 156.

† See *Theol. Repos.* VI. pp. 136, 145—147; *Wakefield*, p. 157.

‡ See *Harmer*, III. pp. 392, 397, 398, *Note*; *Pearce*, I. p. 75. “*Grotius* produces the following sentiment from a Jewish writer: *Ploravi tibi, sed animum non advertisti: risi tibi, sed non curasti*. (I mourned for thee, but thou didst not attend; I laughed for thee, but thou regardedst not.) And he further remarks, that in ancient tragedies, one of the characters sometimes begins a lamentation, and is followed by the chorus; and the preceding quotation seems to intimate that some similar custom prevailed among the Jews.” See *Wakefield*, pp. 157, 158.

§ See *ibid.* pp. 159, 160.



so that it was impossible to give them satisfaction. But Jesus adds, *wisdom*, or the wisdom of God, is *justified by her children*,\* that is, it appears in the different conduct of both John and himself, in their acting differently, according to their different circumstances, and those who attended to divine wisdom, and might therefore be called *the sons of wisdom*, would see and admire it.

20.† Jesus, addressing himself to the multitude in the absence of his disciples, and after the departure of the messengers of John, having complained of the unreasonable prejudice of the Pharisees in rejecting both John and himself, and for quite opposite reasons; (which proves that in both cases they were mere cavillers, and that if the reasons alleged had not occurred to them, others would have been invented,) proceeds to mention the case of some particular cities in Galilee, which had enjoyed the benefit of his preaching, without making a proper use of it, that is, without repenting of their sins, and forsaking them, which was the great object of his preaching and miracles.

The object of the severe censures on the inhabitants of some particular cities, which follow, was not their refusing to receive Jesus as the Messiah, though they might have inferred it from his miracles, and other circumstances attending him, but merely because they did not repent, which they had been repeatedly called upon, both by *John the Baptist* and himself to do. The great burden of all their preaching was, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; and though the people in general admitted the divine mission of John, and could not deny the miracles of Jesus, which, in the fullest manner, proved his own divine mission, their faith had not produced its proper effect in leading them to reform their lives, without which they could not be proper subjects of that kingdom of heaven, which was announced to them.

21. It is remarkable that we have no account of Jesus having ever visited either *Chorazin*‡ or *Bethsaida*. But it may well be supposed that he did it in his absence from *Capernaum*, after curing the demoniac and Peter's wife's mother in that city, and during the same excursion in which

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 75; *Wakefield*, pp. 159, 160. It is proposed by *Castalio*, *Elser*, &c., to translate "wisdom is condemned by her own children." See *Le Cene*, pp. 516—518; *Bowyer*, p. 8.

† "He began to reproach; that is, simply, he reproached. A Hebrew pleonasm, common in the Old and New Testament. See *Gen.* ix. 20; x. 8, 9." The idiom is sometimes adopted and sometimes neglected by the LXX." *Wakefield*, p. 161.

‡ See *Bowyer*, p. 8; *Pearce*, I. p. 75.

he delivered the sermon on the Mount. Besides, as this sermon was delivered in the neighbourhood of all those cities, and the inhabitants of many of them were, no doubt, present on the occasion, we may consider that excellent moral discourse as delivered to them all, and wherever Jesus came he taught the same doctrine, and gave the same exhortations.

That the inhabitants of *Tyre and Sidon* would actually have repented, if they had heard and seen the same things with those of *Chorazin and Bethsaida*, Jesus must have said upon presumption. We have no account of any prophets having been ever sent to those cities, but it might be presumed that if they had, they would have repented, as the inhabitants of *Nineveh* did in the like case.\*

24. If the condemnation of these cities was so great, on account of their not repenting at the preaching of Jesus, before his divine mission was so abundantly confirmed as it has been since, what must ours be, if we do not improve the superior advantages which we now enjoy? The glad-tidings of the gospel had only been just heard by these people, and they had hardly had time to reflect upon them. Jesus had not wrought miracles many weeks; he had not died, and risen from the dead; and what is more, the gospel had not received that abundant confirmation which it afterwards did from the preaching of the apostles, and from its overcoming all the opposition from the powers of the world, which it required some centuries to accomplish. None of the gospels, or any other books of the New Testament, were then written. But we have these books, and are acquainted with the preaching of the apostles, and the success of it; so that no reasonable doubt can remain upon our minds, if we seriously reflect on the subject. What, then, will be our condemnation, if we do not give suitable attention to the momentous truths which we hear every day, and do not govern our lives by them? As the apostle says, [*Heb. ii. 3.*] "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

25. † We are not to suppose that Jesus was really thankful that God had not revealed the truths of the gospel to *the wise*, but that, on the supposition of their being rejected by them, they were made known to those who might be styled *babes*. ‡ It is an expression similar to that of Paul, (*Rom.*

\* See *Grotius in Wakefield*, pp. 161, 162.

† "Jesus continuing his discourse, said." N. T. 1729, p. 39. See *Pilkington*, p. 203; *Pearce*, l. p. 77; *Impr. Vers.* p. 25.

‡ "Il ne fut question d'aucun bienfait, qui demandoit des actions de graces



vi. 17,) "God be thanked that ye were servants of sin, but now ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered unto you." That is, I thank God that though ye were the servants of sin, ye have now repented, and received the gospel.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matthew xi. (25).* I admire the wisdom of thy providence, O thou Sovereign Disposer of all things, that, in the course of it, the gospel should be received by men who are held in contempt by those who are famed for their wisdom and prudence in the world; as the gospel will thereby have less the appearance of being a scheme of worldly policy, countenanced by the powers of this world, and therefore will appear more credible, and more probable to have come from God, in distant ages.

(27.) All things that relate to the reception and propagation of the gospel are delivered to me by my Father. He only is perfectly acquainted with the full extent of my commission, with what is requisite for the success of it, and what will be the final result of it, here and hereafter. And it is his will that the true knowledge and worship of himself, in all future ages, should be communicated to mankind by means of my gospel; all the rest of the world being sunk in gross ignorance and idolatry.

(28.) This knowledge of the true God I am desirous of communicating to all, and it is peculiarly comfortable and reviving to those who are oppressed with the sense of their ignorance and guilt. All such, without exception, I invite to come to me, that they may find true rest and peace in the belief of the gospel, and in the practice of the duties which it enjoins. The burdens that I shall impose upon you are lighter than those of Moses. The duties that I prescribe will promote your present as well as your future happiness. It is not my disposition or my wish to impose any other.

à l'égard de ceux à qui Dieu n'avait pas révélé ses mystères, mais seulement d'une conduite sage de Dieu, que tous les hommes devoient admirer, comme J. Vorstius l'a remarqué." *Le Cene*, p. 490. "The thanks are meant to be given for God's revealing them to babes, not for his hiding them from the wise." *Pearce*, I. p. 77. "'For having revealed unto babes what thou hast hid from the wise and prudent.' N. T. 1729, I. p. 39. The latter part of this verse is *hyperbolic*, after the *Hebrew* manner, and signifies, I thank thee, O Father! for revealing these things to plain and upright men, *rather than* to the wise and intelligent,—a restriction—absolutely necessary in many passages of Scripture, constructed upon the *eastern* phraseology." *Wakefield*, pp. 163, 164.

"Where we have *I thank thee*, Beza and Erasmus read, *Gloriam tibi tribuo*, 'I give glory unto thee;' which, I think, is the better." *Mede*, (Dis. xxiv.) p. 93. See *Wakefield, Notes*, p. 10; N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 299; *Impr. Vers.* p. 25.

## SECTION XXXV.

*Jesus eats with Simon the Pharisee.**Luke vii. 36—50.*

**LUKE** vii. 36. Jesus had observed with respect to himself, that his usual deportment was different from that of *John the Baptist*. John had come, as he says, *neither eating nor drinking*, but lived in the desert an austere life, his garments coarse and his diet plain, like the ancient prophets; whereas he himself *came eating and drinking*, that is, affecting no singularity, but living in society, and not declining the social enjoyments of life. Accordingly, we find him occasionally at public entertainments, as at a marriage feast, where he wrought his first miracle: we have another instance of the kind, viz. his acceptance of the invitation of a Pharisee to dine with him; and as several of the friends of this Pharisee were also present, and probably our Lord's disciples, this also might be called *a feast*.

37. This *city* was certainly in *Galilee*, for Jesus was not yet gone to Judea, and therefore this Mary could not, as some have supposed, be Mary the sister of Lazarus, who was of *Bethany*, near Jerusalem. Nor is it at all probable that it was Mary Magdalen; for we never read of her being *a sinner*, that is, a woman of a notoriously bad life, but only that she had had *seven demons*, that is, had been much disordered in her mind, or afflicted with madness, a disorder in which Jesus had relieved her.\*

*An alabaster box* means a box that has no handle, being small enough to be held in the hand without that assistance. These boxes were often made with great art, and of costly materials, being designed to hold things of particular value; and there is scarcely any thing which persons in the eastern countries covet more than sweet-scented ointments, both the oil and the fragrance being peculiarly refreshing.

38. † These expressions are all of the greatest reverence and the deepest humility. This ointment was generally poured upon the head, as was done by Mary of Bethany; but this woman, to shew her respect and humility at the

\* See *Lardner*, V. p. 302, XI. pp. 253—263. On *Sinner*, see *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 56; N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 344; *Impr. Vers.* p. 150.

† *Behind*. "Not intelligible without adverting to the posture in which the ancients took their meals." *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 56; N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 344.



same time, anointed the feet of Jesus, after having washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. \*

39. We see here the cavilling disposition of *the Pharisee*, in which he resembled the generality of his sect, with respect to Jesus. Jesus had already given abundant proof of his being *a prophet*, and yet, because he did not decline the civilities of this woman, he concluded that he was no prophet. A prophet does not know all things, but only such as God shall be pleased to reveal to him. But if Jesus had known the character of this woman, the Pharisee might have supposed, what we shall see to have been actually the case, that Jesus had good reasons for permitting her to do as she did.

It is plain, from the Pharisee's concluding that Jesus was no prophet, that he was not supposed to have pretended to be God. There would then, indeed, have been more appearance of reason in what he said, because God must know all things.

40—43. This parable was well adapted to excuse the violent manner in which this woman was affected. It indicated the extreme anguish of her mind, and a deep sense of her guilt and unworthiness, which fully entitled her to forgiveness.

45. Meaning kissing the hand, which is the general token of respect in the East, and which between equals is always returned: † also washing the feet, and anointing the head, are the first civilities paid to a guest in the East. The same custom prevailed in Greece. Perhaps this Pharisee had omitted the usual tokens of respect, in the reception of Jesus, rather than offend his brethren, as he might have invited Jesus for the sake of cavilling with, or exposing him. If this was the case, he well deserved the reproof that was given him.

48, 49. We are not to suppose this woman's *sins* were *forgiven*, on account of the love or affection she expressed to the person of Christ; but for her penitent disposition, which she had before, and which led her to act in this manner: her behaviour was only an expression of what was before in her heart. ‡ Accordingly, Jesus afterwards saith, *Thy faith hath saved thee*; and by *faith* is to be understood every right disposition of the mind towards God, not merely

\* The ancients made a point of wiping the tears of those they loved with their hair. *Martin. (P.)*

† See *Harmer*, II. pp. 56, 57.

‡ See *Mede*, pp. 766, 767.

a belief of what he says, or what he promises, though one of these promises is that of forgiveness to the truly penitent, without which there would be no encouragement to repent.

It is evident from this, as well as from what passed on a former occasion, that there was something new and peculiarly offensive, something that appeared arrogant in this mode of expression. It was at least something at which the Pharisees could more easily cavil; but in reality there is nothing more implied in pronouncing that a person's sins are forgiven by the mercy of God, than that he was cured of any disorder by the power of God. A prophet may be equally authorized to declare both. It is assuming nothing to himself, but only speaking in the name of God, and delivering what we may suppose was suggested to him on the occasion.

50. What impression our Lord's behaviour and discourse made on these Pharisees we are not told. It is probable that, agreeably to the character and conduct of the generality of their sect, they were not conciliated by it, but perhaps rendered more obdurate.

## SECTION XXXVI.

### *The Death of John the Baptist.*

*Matt.* xiv. 1—13; *Mark* vi. 14—29; *Luke* ix. 7—9.

**MATT.** xiv. 1. Presently after Jesus appeared in the character of a public teacher, *John the Baptist* was apprehended by *Herod the Tetrarch*, and committed to prison, but probably without any intention of putting him to death. We have now an account of the manner in which that event was brought about, and of the conduct of Jesus on the occasion. This Herod was the son of *Herod the Great*; and upon the division of his territories into four parts, called *Tetrarchies*, by the Romans, one of these parts, named Galilee, being given to this Herod, he got the title of *Tetrarch*. Another fourth part of Herod's dominion was assigned to Philip, the brother of Herod; another to Lysanias, and the last and principal part, viz. Judea, was governed by a Roman procurator, who was now Pontius Pilate.

2. It is evident that as the fame of Jesus' working miracles quickly spread through all Galilee, it must have soon reached Herod who was king of the country; and since he had not



heard of his miracles till after the death of *John*, and then took him to be the same person with *John*,\* it is impossible that *Jesus* could have preached and have worked miracles a long time before that event. I suppose it might have been a very few weeks, which appears to me to have been abundantly sufficient for all the business that we find to fill them. Upon the supposition of our Lord's public ministry having continued more than three years, about two of them must have elapsed before the imprisonment of *John*, (about which time *Jesus* was arrived in Galilee,) and Herod's hearing of him, which is in the highest degree improbable; especially, as it is evident from history that Herod was in the country all the time. This consideration weighs much with me in reducing the public ministry of Christ to one year and a few months.

*Mark* vi. 14.† *John the Baptist is risen from the dead.* It is evident that Herod had no idea either that the soul of *John the Baptist* might have animated *Jesus*, or that the soul was in a separate state; for he supposed *the Baptist* himself, in person, was come to life again.

*Matt.* xiv. 3. This *Philip* is by Josephus called Herod, but it was very common for persons to have two names, and in all other respects the account of Josephus agrees exactly with that of the evangelists. According to this Jewish historian, this *Herodias*, a woman of a very loose character, was seduced by Herod, whose morals also were very debauched, to leave her husband and live with him, though she had a child (the daughter of whom we have an account of in this place) by Philip. According to Josephus, this Philip was a man of an excellent character; though, *Jesus* being chiefly in the territory of Herod, very little is said of Philip in the Evangelical History.

5. According to *Mark* (vi. 9), *Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him.* It was Herodias only who wished *John's* death, while Herod protected him. This difference, among many others, is a sufficient proof that *Mark* did not copy or abridge *Matthew*: but the difference is of no consequence, as it cannot in the least affect the credibility of the general history. Whether, according to *Matthew*, Herod himself wished to put *John* to death, but was restrained by his fear of the multitude; or, according to *Mark*, it was Herodias only that wished it, but was restrained by Herod: the facts

\* Compare *Pearce*, I. p. 101, and *Wakefield*, pp. 205, 206.

† "And Herod heard of his name, (for it was spread)." *Grotius* in *Bowyer*, p. 22.

are the same, and the two writers differ only in their method of accounting for them.\*

We have other proofs of the great popularity of *John the Baptist*, † and of his being almost universally considered as a true prophet. Thus, when our Saviour, in reply to the cavils of the Scribes and Pharisees a little before his death, asked them what they thought of the baptism of John, they did not dare to speak their real sentiments, because *they feared the people*, who all respected him *as a prophet*. ‡

6. § In the East, no person of any rank or character ever dances in public. This is always done by loose women, who make it their profession, and hire themselves for the purpose; and, according to all travellers, their dances are very lascivious and indecent. It was, therefore, a mark of great condescension in this *daughter of Herodias*, though a certain proof of the profligacy of her character, and that of her mother, that she would do it.

8. According to *Mark* [vi. 24], she had not been previously instructed by her mother; but went out to consult her what she should ask. Such a difference as this, only proves that the two historians did not write in concert, but independently of each other; and therefore, instead of lessening, does in reality strengthen, the credibility of the account; for all authentic histories are written by different historians with these slight variations. They prove, however, that the evangelists did not write by inspiration, for then there would have been no difference in their account of facts, but from their own knowledge or information; and as none of the evangelists were present at this transaction, it had no doubt been differently reported to them.

10. We see how arbitrary were the proceedings of Herod with respect to *John*. || It does not appear that he ever had a regular trial, much less that he had been sentenced to die for any crime with which he had been charged. It is, indeed, probable, from the great popularity of John, that the country would not have borne this, though when the fact was committed, and there was no remedy, they might be struck with consternation, and do nothing. Let us bless God

\* See *Jos Antig.* B. xviii. Ch. v. Sect. ii., and the Remarks of *Le Cene*, pp. 571, 572. See also *Essay*, 1727, pp. 237, 238.

† On his "intrepid conduct," and the value of his example against "courting favour by servility and adulation," see *Wakefield*, p. 207.

‡ "That is a teacher, sent from God." *Ibid.*

§ *Birth-day*. "Perhaps the day of his accession." *Pearce*, I. p. 102. See *Wakefield*, p. 207.

|| See *Harmer*, IV. p. 209.



for the happiness of a free government under which we live; that in this country no man can be long confined without being tried; no man can be condemned without being heard, and seeing his accusers face to face; and that all executions are in public, with sufficient notice before-hand.

13. In this Jesus acted prudently, as he did on all other occasions of seeming danger, though he well knew that God would protect him, till the time of his public ministry was accomplished. Much more, then, ought we to act with the same prudence, when to us all future events are uncertain.

*Into a desert place.* Jesus had left the territories of Herod, and had gone into those of Philip, whose wife Herodias had been. According to *Josephus*, this Philip was an excellent prince.

*By land.* So the phrase  $\pi\epsilon\acute{\rho}\eta$ , as *Pearce* \* shews, often signifies.

It will be some satisfaction to be informed what became of all the persons mentioned in this history, especially as to appearance the hand of God was particularly concerned in the events. *Herod*, who had divorced the daughter of *Aretas*, a king of some part of Arabia, in order to marry *Herodias*, was obliged to go to war with him on that account, and was unsuccessful: afterwards his wife, on his nephew *Agrippa* obtaining the title of *king*, instigated him to go to Rome to solicit the same for himself. But instead of obtaining this, being accused of disaffection to the Romans, both he and his wife were banished to Lyons, in Gaul, where they continued till their deaths. As to this *daughter of Herodias*, it is said that as she was walking on the ice, it broke under her, and that being caught by the neck, her head was severed from her body. *Philip* died, as he had lived, in peace, universally respected and lamented.

## SECTION XXXVII.

### *The Feeding of the Five Thousand.*

*Matt.* xiv. 14—21; *Mark* vi. 30—44; *Luke* ix. 10—17;  
*John* vi. 1—14.

WE are now come to the account of a transaction recorded at full length by all the four evangelists, and most circumstantially by *John*, who had seen what the others had written.

\* After *Blackwall* (*Sacr. Class.* II. p. 205), *Com.* I. p. 104. See *Wahlgfeld*, p. 208.

Now I cannot think that *John* did this because there was any thing materially defective in the preceding accounts; for though his is, no doubt, more circumstantial than any of the other three, the additional circumstances mentioned by him are but inconsiderable. I am therefore rather inclined to think, that this has been an account of the transaction written by *John*, or taken from his mouth, some time before he had seen the other gospels, and perhaps before he had formed any design of writing one himself.

As the great business of the apostles was to relate the history of Jesus, or to inform the world what he had taught and done, it could not be but that in an age and country, in which almost all persons could read and write, (for such is now, and probably always has been, the case with the Jews,) many persons, not choosing to depend upon their memories, would commit to writing what they heard the apostles deliver concerning things of so very extraordinary a nature, and if they had an opportunity, which many of them had, they would afterwards submit what they had written to the revisal of the apostles themselves. From such notes as these many imperfect histories of Jesus would, no doubt, be composed, and to such it is probable that *Luke* alludes in the introduction to his gospel.

It is the more probable that this gospel of *John* was compiled, partly from accounts separately furnished by himself in the course of a long life, and partly composed for the purpose, as the different parts have not been put together with the greatest care, with respect to the order of time; which not being a thing of the first consequence, appears to have been but little attended to by these compilers. One whole chapter of this gospel is unquestionably out of its place; and the last was added, after a regular conclusion of the whole in the preceding chapter.

But on whatever occasion the history we are going to consider was composed, the particulars of which it consists are most extraordinary; and if we may make a comparison of miracles, all of which being performed by the immediate power of God, are equally easy to him, we should consider this as one of the most stupendous and astonishing that we have upon record.

*Mark* vi. 33. *And many knew it, that is, the place.\**

\* *Markland. (P.)* "It is much more probable that the *place* whither they were going, should be spoken of as known to the people, who might have been informed of it by the apostles. That many of them should know *Jesus himself* could hardly be worth noticing. It would have been rather extraordinary, if, after all that had



*John* vi. 1. Perhaps an arm of the sea only may be here intended.\* This *Tiberias* was in the territory of Philip, the brother of Herod, a prince, as I have observed, of an excellent character. But whether Jesus came hither with a view to greater safety, does not appear. As it was a desert, or unfrequented part of the country, he might choose it for the sake of retirement, for himself and the apostles after their mission, especially as *Luke* [ix. 10] says that upon their return *he took them aside privately into a desert place*. It appears, however, that so great was the fame of Jesus, and so attentive were the people to him, that he could not long be concealed, but into this retired place he was presently followed by a very great multitude.

3. This is very similar to the circumstance of our Lord's retiring from the crowds which incommoded him at *Caper-naum*, and it was from a mountain in this part of the country that he delivered his excellent discourse to his disciples. Sitting was the posture of a teacher among the Jews; so that when the evangelist says that Jesus *sat*, it is probable that he meant to imply that he *taught* his audience in that place.

4. The supposition that a *Passover* happened about this period of the history, has occasioned great embarrassment to many of those who have written harmonies of the evangelists; and it is remarkable that a very early writer, *Irenæus*, enumerating all the Passovers that are mentioned in the course of the gospel history, and whose wish it was to find therein as many as possible, makes no mention of this. For this reason, and others, many have supposed the word *Passover* to have been an interpolation,† the evangelist having mentioned the feast only. *Pearce* thinks that the whole verse is an interpolation.‡

6. As Jesus knew very well what he was to do, and as he also knew that *Philip* could not possibly know his intentions, it looks as if he only meant to amuse himself with his reply, though the question would, no doubt, excite his attention to the extraordinary circumstances in which they were.

7. Two hundred *denarii* (which we very improperly trans-

passed, they should not have known him. Perhaps πολλοι περιεγινωσαν may here mean that many *observed* or *watched* him, to find whither he was going." *Jebb* in *Harm.* 1780, p. 96.

\* *Markland.* (P.)

† "Mr. Mann thought the word πασχα to be an interpolation." *Harm.* 1780, p. 96. See *Mann*, pp. 161—163; *Bowyer*, pp. 50—52; the Author's "Essays on the Harmony" (No. 1 *ad fin.*), *Theol. Repos.* II, pp. 46, 47.

‡ See *Com.* I. p. 499.

late *pence*, as it necessarily gives the English reader a false idea of the sum) would be something more than six pounds of our money ;\* in real value about three times as much.

10. With what astonishment would the apostles hear such an order as this, when there was no preparation to entertain so great a company, and they were without any provisions ! But they were used to an implicit obedience to his orders, and could have no doubt but what he directed them to do was proper. *Mark* [vi. 40] says *they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties*,† meaning probably a hundred in one direction, and fifty in another, making in all, fifty ranks, of a hundred each, or exactly *five thousand*. This was an easy method of taking the exact number, and thereby ascertaining the truth of this important fact.

11. With respect to the manner in which this miracle was wrought, there was something in it more wonderful than the descent of the manna in the Wilderness, since the provision seems to have multiplied in the hands of Jesus : for this we are led to suppose from the manner in which it is related, rather than that the increase was made all at once, before the distribution was begun.

13. The order to collect *the fragments* was, no doubt, given with a view to impress the minds of all present, and especially the disciples, who executed his orders, with a sense of the greatness of the miracle ; and nothing could do this more forcibly than finding that more provision remained than there was at the beginning of the entertainment. This circumstance also shews that all the company had had enough ; and considering the number of them, what remained was not more than might have been expected from so many persons eating till they were satisfied, and without waste.

14. It is no wonder that the spectators drew this inference from such a miracle as this : for it is hardly possible to imagine the circumstances of a miracle which should be less exposed to cavil. It was not done in private, but in the presence of a great multitude, and in open day ; and it was of so great magnitude, that no sleight of hand could have availed any thing. Neither could it have been any ocular deception, because these loaves and fishes afforded real nourishment to a hungry crowd, and they must have been delivered in a state ready prepared for eating. And as this

\* *Pearce*, I. p. 499.

† "It should rather have been rendered *by a hundred and by fifty* ; i. e. one hundred in front, and fifty deep.—This gives a clear idea of the arrangement." *Turner in Harm.* 1780, p. 96.



was done in the open field, it is impossible that any preparations could have been made before-hand for an exhibition of the kind. Had it been made in a private house, or in a town, a deception would have been more practicable, though then extremely difficult; and it must have required the concurrence of many persons; whereas it is evident that the apostles themselves were no more apprized of the intentions of Jesus than any of the multitude. This miracle is a proof of a proper *creative power*, and the effect, great as it was, must have been instantaneous.

With respect to all the miracles of our Saviour recorded by the evangelists, it may be observed that, like his discourses, they were all proper to the occasion that presented, and rose naturally out of them; which shews that there was no antecedent preparations for any of them. Of this kind was furnishing wine when it was particularly wanted; curing the sick of every kind, at all times and in all places, as they happened to be brought to him; and in this case feeding a great multitude that was famishing for want of nourishment. Besides, the number of Jesus's miracles was as great as to furnish opportunities of frequent examination; and the circumstances of all of them were such, that an imposition would have been impossible. Let us rejoice in our faith in so important an history as this, which has such abundant confirmation; but let us more effectually ever bear in mind that the end of faith is a suitable practice.

## SECTION XXXVIII.

### *Jesus walks on the Sea.*

*Matt.* xiv. 22—36; *Mark* vi. 45—56; *John* vi. 15—21.

FROM an account of one stupendous miracle we now proceed to another, but of a very different nature; as the object of it was not the relief of any persons in distress, but, as far as we can judge, a mere act of power, or a proof of such power accompanying Jesus as was equal to the controul, and consequently to the establishment, of any of the laws of nature. It was calculated to give his disciples the best-founded faith in his divine mission, and the strongest confidence in all his declarations of what he promised to do for them in any future time.

*Matt.* xiv. 22. *John* (vi. 15) says, that “when Jesus perceived that they (*the multitude*) would come and take him

by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone;" and here *Matthew* says that "Jesus constrained his disciples to go into a ship." It is probable, therefore, that his disciples favoured the views of the multitude, and were impatient to see their Master a king; so that it was with some difficulty that he obliged them to leave him.\* At this time the apostles themselves had the same low and unworthy views with the rest of the people; and when they were gone, Jesus might with more ease disengage himself from the importunities of the rest of the multitude.

23. It is very observable that we often read of Jesus retiring for the purpose of private devotion, which shews the deep sense he had of his entire dependence upon God, and is a striking example for us, who are equally dependent upon the Great Being who made us, and continually supports us. It is extraordinary, however, that these frequent accounts of Jesus praying to God, should not have prevented any idea of his being himself God; for if he had been God, he could not have had any occasion to pray. That his human nature prayed to his divine nature, or that one part of himself prayed to the other part, is too absurd to be replied to.

25. The *fourth* or *last watch of the night* was near morning.† Besides, the event here recorded was probably about the time of full moon; so that, though it was night, it was not so dark but that objects might be seen at some distance.

26. This was a very natural apprehension to persons who believed in apparitions or *spirits*, as they were sometimes called, that is, something in the form of a man, but without substance.‡ These spirits were not always supposed to have been the souls of men; and it is observable that in the Scriptures we never read of any of them being called the spirit of any other person: even when Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, and they thought it had been *a spirit*, it is not said that they thought it to have been *his* spirit, but only a spirit, as an apparition in general, though perhaps in his form.

28. In our translation it is, *If it be thou*; but if Peter had had the smallest doubt of its being Jesus, he would never have ventured upon the sea to meet him. I therefore render it, *Since it is thou*.

\* "They probably thought this a proper opportunity, and were unwilling to let it slip, or to be absent, so as not to be able to distinguish their zeal on the occasion." *Benson's Life of Christ*, p. 295, in *Harm.* 1780, p. 98.

† See *Grotius* in *Wakefield*, p. 219.

‡ See *ibid.* pp. 214, 215.



30. The whole account of this transaction is perfectly natural, such as we might expect from a person who was present, as *Matthew*, no doubt, was. The fright of the people in the ship was certainly natural, and so was *Peter's* desire, when his fears were dissipated, to walk on the sea to meet Jesus. His familiarity with his Master, as well as his confidence in himself, appears to have been on all occasions greater than that of the other apostles; and it was equally natural, and in character with respect to him, for his heart to fail him when he found nothing but the waves under him, and the boisterous wind agitating them.

31. Here Jesus shewed the same tenderness and condescension that he did upon many other occasions, permitting *Peter* to feel the effects of his presumption, as he did upon a more serious occasion afterwards, but not suffering him to receive any material injury from it.

32. That this *ceasing of the wind* was miraculous, is not said by the evangelist, but probably it was so.

33. The astonishment of the persons in this ship was equal to that of those who saw Jesus perform the similar miracle of stilling the waves; and no wonder. They could not but conclude from it that God was with him, and highly favoured him, which is all that is necessarily meant by his being called *the Son of God*.\* It is probable, however, that by this phrase these people meant the *Messiah*, who was the Son of God, and a person favoured by God in a peculiar manner. Their attempts to make him a king, shewed their persuasion that he was the Messiah, for they would not have thought of this with respect to any other prophet.

Notwithstanding the astonishment frequently expressed by those who were spectators of our Saviour's miracles, we do not find that they were at any time led to suspect that he was God, which they would as readily have said if they had really thought him to be God, as to have called him *the Son of God*. And certainly the Son of God must signify a person different from God, whose son he was; and in the Old Testament the phrase *Son of God*, is generally applied to men who were particularly favoured by God.

35, 36. The *knowledge* that the people of this country had of Jesus, was probably from his having cured the two demo-

\* "*Thou art a son of God*, or a divine person; a *Hebrew* form of speech. Whenever these words mean to discriminate the particular son of God, *the Messiah*, they are used with both the articles: *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the *Son of God*. See *Ch* iv. 3." Wakefield, pp. 57, 58, 215, 216. See *Impr. Vers.* p. 35.

niacs in it. They had, therefore, no doubt of his power to cure any disease ; \* and they were not disappointed in their expectations from him.

## SECTION XXXIX.

*Jesus discourses with the Jews concerning Bread.*

*John vi. 22—71.*

**JOHN vi. 24.** We now find Jesus at *Capernaum*, surrounded by a mixed and cavilling multitude, several of them the very persons whom he had lately fed in a miraculous manner, and who had been disappointed in their expectations of making him a king. Jesus knowing their dispositions, and that their minds were not open to any favourable impression, and not choosing (in his own language) *to cast pearls before swine*, he upon this, as upon a former occasion when he spake in parables, addressed them in a dark, enigmatical manner ; having a very important meaning, but not being solicitous about being understood by them.

25. This appears afterwards to have been in the synagogue, so that it was probably the Sabbath-day, and that they found him attending the public worship of the place.

27. In this discourse of Jesus there is something analogous to his conversation with the woman of Samaria. He there compared himself, or rather his doctrine, to *living*, or spring water, which would prevent any return of thirst, a water *which springeth up to eternal life* ; and in this he compares himself to *bread*, which if a man eat he will never hunger more. Now in this there was nothing peculiarly hard to be understood by Jews, with whom it appears to have been usual to compare knowledge and instruction to bread ; and, indeed, the comparison is very easy and natural, knowledge doing that to the mind, which bread does to the body, viz. nourishing, strengthening and enlivening it. The offence, therefore, which the Jews took at Jesus on this occasion, seems to have arisen from their disappointment in their favourite view of making him a king. Their minds being carnal, and not looking beyond the present life, they had no comprehension of what he said respecting another, and being offended, they cavilled with him about his language, without any view of gaining information or instruction. Jesus per-

\* On the Jews' acknowledgment of Christ's miracles, and their manner of accounting for them, see *Wakefield*, p. 216.



ceiving their obstinacy, answered in a manner little adapted to give them satisfaction, not being solicitous about the attachment of persons so prejudiced as they were.

*Sealed* signifies appointed, or commissioned; and this appointment or commission being from God, the hearers of Jesus could not doubt of his being empowered to perform whatever he should promise in the name of God, even raising the dead at the general judgment, to which he here alluded.

27—29. Jesus having mentioned *labour*, by which they could procure bread, which would nourish them to eternal life, they naturally asked him what that labour was, or what they should do to procure this bread; or what were *the works of God*, the works that he would so reward them for. And Jesus naturally replied, that the things God required of them at this time was their receiving him as a messenger from God, and of course complying with his instructions, or hearing and doing his word.

30. *What sign shewest thou?* It seems extraordinary that the very people who had been just before fed by a miracle should demand any other sign, as an evidence of a divine mission. But the sign that they thought to be characteristic of the *Messiah* was some visible appearance in the clouds, or heavens, which therefore, we find, they were incessantly demanding. They seem, indeed, to allude to, and acknowledge, his having fed them by a miracle; but still the bread that Jesus gave them did not *come down from heaven*, as the *manna* had done. Our Lord, seeing them so very unreasonable and obstinate, discoursed to them in a dark, enigmatical manner, not being desirous of their attachment or attendance.

32. Probably *αληθινον* ought to be understood as agreeing with the former as well as the latter *αρτον*. Moses gave you not the true bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.\*

Here, however, as on several former occasions, there may be a Hebrew form of comparison, and the meaning be, *The bread given by the Son of Man, producing eternal life, is preferable to the bread that was given by Moses.*

35. *He that believeth in me so as the Scriptures have commanded.*†

36. *Ye have seen me perform the miracle of the loaves, and ye believe not that testimony that I am the bread of life.*‡

37—39. Here Jesus considers the success of his mission,

\* Turner. (P.) See *Pewee*, l. p. 502.

† Markland. (P.)

‡ Turner. (P.)

as depending on the providence of God, who was the best judge of what was to be wished with respect to the number and the rank of his first disciples. As, therefore, on a former occasion, he thanked God for his wisely ordering that these disciples should not, in general, be the rich and great, but the poor and humble, so here he entirely acquiesces in the will of God, saying that, whatever that will was, it should be his; for his whole object was no other than to fulfil the will of God who sent him.

40. Here our Lord reverts to the great object of his mission, which he declares in the plainest terms. Who were the particular persons that God would give him for his immediate disciples, or what was the will of God in that respect, he might not always know; but this he knew, that whoever they should be, he would be empowered to give them eternal life; and this was, not by continuing their being from the time of their death, but by *raising them up at the last day*.

41. We now proceed with this remarkable discourse of Jesus to the cavilling Jews of the synagogue of Capernaum.

42. They could not see with what propriety or truth Jesus could say he came down from heaven, when they were acquainted with his birth and parentage, and well knew that he was born, and had lived, like other men. We see here that the people of Galilee considered Jesus as no less the son of *Joseph* than of *Mary*; so that if his birth had been miraculous, they were ignorant of it; and yet as the history is related either by *Matthew* or *Luke*, it must have excited great attention, and must, one would think, have been recollected when he made his public appearance.

44. He does not say that when he dies he will take his soul into heaven, but *I will raise him up at the last day*. To this great day let us habitually have respect, the day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed, and when every man will receive according to his works.

45, 46. There is much obscurity and uncertainty with respect to the meaning of Jesus in these verses. I shall give in the paraphrase what may perhaps be their true sense.

47. Here Jesus expresses his meaning in plainer language, asserting that the qualification for eternal life which he announced, was believing on him. But in *believing*, we are always to suppose *obeying* to be comprehended; as he says, upon another occasion, the true believer, *he that builds his house upon a rock*, is he that *heareth his sayings, and doeth them*. After this plain account of his doctrine, it is most



evident that what he had said of himself being *bread*, his flesh, *meat*, and his blood, *drink*, could only be a strong figure, of the true meaning of which, his audience would be sufficiently apprized; and the reason why he called *himself*, and not his *doctrine*, bread, was probably because a body, or flesh, was *substance*, and therefore more nearly resembled bread, than mere *truth*, to which he all along alluded.

52. It is evident from this that these Jews were mere cavillers, and only meant to turn the language of Jesus into ridicule; for he had just before said, *he that believeth on me hath everlasting life*, so that the eating of his flesh could not be necessary. He therefore, seeing their disposition, repeats the same figure in a still stronger manner, but the key to it had been given before.

55. *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* A very strong figure; meaning by his *flesh* and *blood*, his *doctrine*, which may be called the food of the soul.

58. This language of Jesus, together with his calling the bread and wine at his supper, his body and blood, are alleged by the Catholics as proofs of their doctrine of *transubstantiation*. They maintain that the elements of bread and wine, when regularly consecrated, are changed into the real body and blood of Christ, and that literally to eat his body is necessary to salvation. It was, however, more than a thousand years before this doctrine was advanced; and the different steps upon which it was made are extremely curious. But I shall not enter into the detail of them here, having done it pretty much at large in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*.\* A refutation of so absurd a doctrine as this, will not be required by my readers.

63. As it is breath that gives life to the body, which is dead without it, so my doctrine is that which gives life, meaning eternal life, to man.†

In these words Jesus gives an explanatory key to most of the obscurities in the preceding discourse; and it appears from Peter's profession, (*vers.* 68, 69,) that he understood them as such.

65. The sense of all that is included between this verse and the *sixty-first*, I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase, in which I have supposed that Jesus spoke of his having *descended* from heaven in a figurative sense, though the *ascent* of which he speaks in the same sentence

\* Vol. V. pp. 250—262. See Lardner, II. pp. 427, 428, 537; Geddes's *Apol.* pp. 149—160.

† Wakefield. (P.)

was a literal one. This might well be, considering that by his *body*, which he compared to bread, he only meant his *doctrine*, which could not have any other than a figurative descent, it not being a substance, and therefore incapable of local motion. Besides, any person may be said to come from God, or, which is the same thing, to come from heaven, where God is supposed to reside, who has received a commission from God. Thus *John the Baptist* is said [*John* i. 6] to have been *sent from God*, and Jesus speaks of his sending apostles into the world, as he himself was sent into the world. But when our Lord received his commission, which was probably during the forty days in which he fasted after his baptism, he might have an idea of his being in heaven,\* as *Paul* had during his trance, when he could not tell whether the scene was real, or only a vision. Consequently when this remarkable scene was over, and Jesus found himself on the earth, he might imagine that he had been taken up into heaven, and brought down again. It is very possible, therefore, that Jesus might allude to his having been in heaven, and having come down again, in the literal sense of the words, when he speaks of *his ascending up where he had been before*. This was the opinion of the Polish Socinians, and also of Mr. Palmer, whose sagacity in Scripture researches was truly admirable.† That Jesus did not allude to any pre-existent and unembodied state, is very evident, because he here speaks of himself as *the Son of Man*; and certainly his *body* had not been in heaven before he was born.

I would also observe, in general, that we are not to build great and important doctrines, such as that of the pre-existence of Christ, and his having created the world, merely on supposed allusions to them; though when any doctrine has been clearly taught, or any fact plainly asserted, we may then naturally suppose allusions, where they otherwise would not have been imagined.

68, 69. We have here a specimen of the excellent disposition of Peter, and of the steady attachment which he had to his Master. He was, no doubt, as much disappointed as the rest of the disciples at Jesus not declaring himself a king: but such was his conviction of his coming from God, that this great disappointment did not break his faith. We see, too, that he perfectly understood the meaning of Jesus in the preceding discourse, to which he alludes; acknowledging that it was his *words*, or his *doctrine*, that would prepare men for eternal life.

\* See *supra*, p. 35.

† See *supra*, p. 39.



70. \* *One of you is a traitor, or the devil.* This may be rendered one of you is a *false accuser*. And as the same term is generally used for *the source or principle of evil*, and there is no allusion to any particular act of treachery on this occasion, our Lord might only mean to say that he was a *bad man*, notwithstanding the many advantages he had for religious instruction. Thus our Lord called Peter *Satan*, when what he suggested was of an evil nature and tendency.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* vi. (44.) Do not imagine that I am very anxious about gaining you to be my disciples. The success of my gospel in this age, as well as in every future age, will be such as my Father shall judge to be most proper. But whoever shall become my disciple, not in *name* only, but *in deed and in truth*, I will raise him up to eternal life at the last day. (45.) That the success of my preaching depends upon the good will and providence of God, is attested by the prophets, who say that *they shall be all taught of God*. All, therefore, who come to me must be those whose hearts it shall please God to so well-dispose that they hear and receive the truth. (46.) Not that I speak of any miraculous influence of the Divine Being, so that men shall be impelled to become my disciples by a direct impulse from him. This is true only of myself, who have the most intimate and peculiar communication with God. What I mean by hearing and learning of the Father, is, hearing and learning things by those means which the Divine Being has provided in the course of his common providence, and agreeable to the general laws which he has established in nature.

(61.) Are you offended that I should speak of myself under the character of *bread*, to be eaten by you, when I mean my doctrine, which is to be received and digested for your spiritual nourishment, and that I have spoken of myself as having been sent down from heaven, as was the *manna* on which the Israelites subsisted in the Wilderness? (62.) You may perhaps see more truth in this representation than you now imagine, when you shall see me actually and literally go up into heaven, from whence I have now spoken of my having descended, in a figurative sense only. (63.) My meaning, however, has been altogether spiritual, and it is only the figurative meaning of what I have been describing that can possibly be of any use. To eat my flesh literally

\* "Perhaps affirmatively: 'I have not chosen you all twelve: but one of you is a devil.' *Elsner*," in *Bowyer*, p. 52. See *Doddridge* (Sect. lxxxii. Note e).

would profit you nothing. It is the word that I speak unto you, it is my doctrine, that is the true spirit and meaning of what I have been describing. It is this alone on which men can live in a spiritual and proper sense. (64.) Some of you, I know, do not believe on me. This (says the evangelist) had been communicated to Jesus from the very beginning of his ministry; so that he fully knew who would be his sincere disciples, and who they were who would desert and betray him. (65.) This led him to say that, no man could come to him if it was not given to him of the Father.

## SECTION XL.

*Jesus cures the impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda, and discourses with the Jews concerning his Mission.*

*John v. 1—47.*

It is generally agreed that the apostle *John*, who had seen the gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, wrote his, in order to supply their defects, and also to check some heresies which began to prevail in his time. But this he does without expressly mentioning the heresies, or pointing out the defects of the other evangelists. It is pretty evident, however, that writing, as he probably did, either very near to, or soon after, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, he attended more than the other evangelists had done to such passages of the history of Jesus, and especially to such of his discourses, as tended to shew that the Jews had had sufficient opportunities of being convinced of his divine mission, that he himself had frequently expostulated with them on the subject in the most open manner, but that they had always shewn the most inveterate obstinacy, and a disposition of mind that would not yield to any proper evidence whatsoever. They were so worldly-minded, that no evidence of miracles, the strongest that could be given, was capable of satisfying them, that any person besides a prince, and a conqueror, could be the *Messiah*, promised by the ancient prophets. This chapter furnishes us with a very remarkable example of this kind, as well as of their unreasonable cavils on account of Jesus performing his benevolent miracles on the Sabbath-day, as if it was *a servile work*, forbidden by the laws of Moses, and as if he who could do such things as these (which must have been by the power of God) had not necessarily a sufficient warrant for so doing.



*John* v. 1. The fifth and sixth chapter beginning with the same words, have probably been transposed.\*

4. We are not concerned to know whether this was a real miracle or not. It was, at least, the general opinion of the Jews that it was so;† and if it was a mistake, it was not the business of Jesus to correct or consider it, any more than their opinion of madness being occasioned by *demons*. If these waters had any medical virtue, the Jews would naturally ascribe it to the hand of God.‡ Indeed, the sacred writers themselves habitually refer every thing that is good to God, whether it be brought about in a miraculous way or not, as we read in the proper translation of *Psalms* civ. 4, *He maketh the winds his angels, and flames of fire his messengers*.

17, 18. The offence which the Jews took at our Lord's expression, was not because he said *that God was his Father*; for they were ready enough to say of themselves (*Chap.* viii. 41), *We have one Father, even God*; but because when he called God his Father, he at the same time pretended to act like him. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*. Accordingly our Lord (*vers.* 19, and following) answers to their charge by largely asserting that in many respects he did, and should act like God his Father, but only by his commission, authority and power.

It is in the highest degree improbable, either that Jesus should intend to represent himself as, in all respects, *equal to God*, when he said, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, or that the Jews should have so understood him; there being nothing in the words that could lead to such a construction. We all do many things that God does, and are exhorted in the Scriptures so to do. Had the Jews really

\* *Mann. (P.)* See *True Years*, (*Diss.* ii.) pp. 156—165; *Bowyer*, p. 49; *Doddridge*, *Sect.* xlvii. (*Note a*) lxviii. (*Notes b, c*).

† "It is not said that any angel was seen, but every thing which had a divine effect was, in the Jewish way of speaking, said to be done by angels; of which *2 Kings* xix. 35, and *Matt.* xxviii. 2, may be reckoned instances." *Pearce*, I. p. 492.

‡ Dr Mead says, "My notion is, that the water of this pool acquired its medicinal virtues from the mud settled at bottom, which was charged with metallic salts, perhaps from sulphur, alum or nitre. And whenever it happened that the water was troubled by any natural cause whatsoever, perhaps a subterraneous heat or rains, these salts were raised up and mixed with it, and might well be beneficial to those who went down into the pool, before the metallic particles subsided." He adds, "that whenever any thing uncommon or surprising happened, of which the Jews could not investigate the cause, they were accustomed to say, it was done *by the Angel of the Lord*." He however conjectures that "this salutary virtue of the water" might be "so regulated by God, as at the same time to afford the Jews a token of his presence." *Med. Sacr.* (*Ch.* viii.) pp. 69, 71, 72.

*Maundrell*, in 1697, visited, and described, "that which they call the Pool of Bethesda." *Journey*, pp. 107, 108.

thought that Jesus made himself in any proper sense *equal to God*, this conversation would, no doubt, have had a more serious consequence. Would the Jews have borne this of any man, and particularly of a man whom they disliked? Would they have needed to seek any occasion to put him to death, merely for healing the sick on the Sabbath-day, when they had such a better handle against him, an accusation in which all the nation would have concurred? If it had been Jesus's real intention to insinuate that he was equal to God, would he have explained his meaning away, as he did, by saying that *the Son could do nothing of himself*? Would not that have been saying and unsaying in a manner very unworthy of a divine teacher? His manner of reply will certainly justify us in supposing that he meant no such thing, and did not imagine that his hearers supposed it; but only that they thought he assumed more than became him on account of his relation to God: for to this charge, and nothing else, he replies.

19. This is evidently the language of one who conceived himself to be nothing more than any other man, without the power of God accompanying him,\* and could not have been said with truth, if he had been either God, or originally endowed by God with a power equal to that of the making of the world, and consequently of controuling the laws of nature. Is it not true that we have *within ourselves*, though by the gift of God, the powers of speaking and walking? &c. &c. If Jesus, therefore, had an equally natural power of working miracles, could he have said with truth, that *of himself* he could not heal the sick, and raise the dead? Would he not have deceived his hearers by such language?

25. The reason why men were to *honour the Son*, is evidently, from the connexion in which the whole passage stands, *not on his own account*, for he had just before said, that *of himself he could do nothing*, but solely on account of the power conferred upon him by the Father, who is said to have *committed all judgment to him*; which alone clearly implies that he had no right to it of himself, independently of the *gift* of his Father. The honour paid to an ambassador is never considered as paid to him *on his own account*, but only on account of the person who sends him, and whom he represents.

\* See the attempts of two eminent Trinitarian commentators to avoid this natural inference, and to accommodate to their system the language here attributed to Jesus. *Doddridge*, Sect. xlvii.; *Pearce*, l. p. 494.



25. *And now is*; \* referring, probably, to several instances of his raising, or intending to raise, persons from the dead in his life-time.

26, 27. † As there was a propriety in Christ's being *in all respects like his brethren*, or of the same nature with them, neither greater nor less, and especially that his resurrection from the dead should be a pattern of ours, so it was also particularly proper on account of his being our final judge, that we might have more confidence in the equity of his sentence.‡ Yet, though Christ is generally said to be our judge, this office is not strictly confined to him. *Paul* says, [1 *Cor.* vi. 2,] "that the saints shall judge the world," and *Jesus* himself says, [*Matt.* xix. 29,] that *when he shall sit upon his throne*, the apostles also "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." What is strictly meant by Christ, or the apostles, or the saints in general, *judging the world*, we must not expect to know with certainty till the great day shall come. It is a figurative expression, but no doubt has some important meaning.

33—35. Although our Lord declines insisting on *John's* testimony concerning himself, he mentions it very properly; what weight it had with the considerate and candid among the Jews appears from *Chap.* x. 41, 42, who said, "John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there." §

The images of *fire* and *light* happily express the benefits of instruction. They are frequent in the Psalms. Thus David [cxix. 105] speaks of the law of God as a *lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path*. It is also remarkable that the same figures are applied to *Elias* in *Ecclesiasticus*, (xlvi. 1,) "Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp."

36—38. *Jesus* refers to three kinds of evidences which the Father had given of his mission: first, the miracles he empowered him to work, *ver.* 36; secondly, the voice from heaven, and the descent of the Spirit on him in a visible form at his baptism, of which many had been witnesses (*vers.* 37, 38); and thirdly, the predictions of the prophets (*ver.* 39). If we read the words in the latter part

\* Omitted in some MSS. See *Pearce*, I. p. 495, *Note*.

† "A son: viz. a man. See *Heb.* ii. 14, 18." See also the "arrangement of the words by the Syrian translator," Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 98; N. T. Ed. 2, 1795, I. p. 384. See *Bowyer*, p. 50.

‡ See the Author, *Theol. Repos.* III. p. 348.

§ *Turner* in *Harm.* 1780, p. 103.

of the 37th and 38th verses interrogatively, they will appear to refer to what happened at the baptism of Jesus, and to contain a very striking sentiment. "Have ye neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his appearance? And have ye not his word remaining in you, that ye believe not him whom he hath sent?" That is, Do ye not remember what he then said; or hath it left no impression on you? \*

39.† The sense will be clearer if the 42d verse be read after the 39th.‡

42. It hath been already suggested in the first volume of the *Theological Repository*, that this clause seems, through the error of some early transcriber, to have got out of its original place, which probably was before the 40th verse. If we restore it thither, the passage will read thus, "But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you, and ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." A sentiment perfectly conformable to what our Lord had said to the Jews in Galilee, (*Chap. vi. 45.*) "Every one, therefore, who hath heard and learneth of the Father, cometh unto me." The following words also will have a like clear connexion: "I receive not honour from men; I am come in my Father's name." By *δοξαν* (*honour*) he seems to mean *credentials*, or the *evidence* of the truth of his mission as the Christ. So also verse 44; compare 2 *Peter* i. 17.§

43. This was verified in the future history of the Jews, who received as the *Messiah*, persons who wrought no miracles, but only promised them great temporal advantages, such as they expected from their Messiah, whereas Jesus, who had every proper testimonial of a divine mission, was rejected, because he wanted that one characteristic on which they perpetually insisted, namely his being their prince and temporal deliverer.

47. We do not find in the writings of Moses any proper prophecy of the Messiah. These were reserved to a later period of the Jewish history. But it was usual with the Jews, who were at that time expecting the greatest things from the Messiah, to suppose that there were allusions to him in all the parts of the Scripture. There is, indeed, in Moses, a description of true and false prophets in general, and Jesus exactly answered to one of those who were de-

\* *Turner. (P.)*

† "Perhaps interrogatively, 'Do you search the Scriptures, and yet will not come to me?'" *Homborgius, in Bowyer, p. 50.*

‡ *Theol. Repos. l. pp. 56, 57. (P.)*

§ *Turner. (P.) See on vers. 30—43, Theol. Repos. l. pp. 55—58.*



scribed by Moses as to rise up after him, *like unto himself*, whom they were required to hear;\* and yet though Jesus was not only like, and equal, but even superior to Moses, the Jews rejected him.

## PARAPHRASE.

*John v.* (17.) My heavenly Father worketh continually in the course of his providence, and on the sabbaths as well as on other days, so that in doing good on the sabbath days I only follow his example. (18.) The Jews were the more enraged, and sought to kill him, because, besides having broken the sabbath, he now pretended to justify himself in so doing by the example of God, as if God's doing any thing would authorize him to do the like, which was to put himself on a level with God in a sense which they thought no man had a right to do.

(19.) Jesus answered, Think not that I arrogate to myself any thing independent of God. I do nothing of myself, but whatever the Father does, I have in commission to do the same. (20.) For such is the regard that the Father bears to me, that he empowers me to do whatever himself does; and that I have this power, you will see verified with respect to greater things than those that you have yet seen. (21.) The most extraordinary work that I do in imitation of God, is raising the dead to life. This the Father does, and extraordinary as you may think it, the same power has the Son likewise. He also brings to life whomsoever he pleases. (22.) Nay, subsequent to the resurrection, the general judgment is a thing that God does not think proper to administer in person, but he has committed it to the conduct of the Son. (23.) These powers, therefore, being delegated from the Father to the Son, the Son is to be honoured as the Father's representative.

(24.) This power of raising the dead to an eternal happy life I shall exert in favour of all who believe and obey my gospel. (25.) The time is now at hand when I shall exhibit some specimens of this great power of raising the dead; and in due time all the dead shall hear my voice and live. (26.) For as the Father has the power of giving life, so has he communicated the same power to the Son. (27.) And there is a particular propriety in his delegating to *a man* the office of judging and deciding the fates of men, as there can be

\* See *Deut. xx.* 18, 20, Vol. XI. p. 284.

no reason to complain of the sentence ; since a man, who has been tempted and who has felt like themselves, may be supposed to make all reasonable allowance for them. These considerations may serve to lessen your wonder at the communication of these very extraordinary powers to a man.

(28, 29.) Do not wonder at it, therefore, for it is certainly true, that all the dead shall hear my voice and come to life, the righteous to eternal life and happiness, and the wicked to condemnation.

(30.) But in all this there is nothing that I do of myself. It is from God that I receive this perfect knowledge of characters, which enables me to decide justly concerning them. My judgment, therefore, must be just, because it is the same with that of God himself. It is his judgment that guides mine, and his will that I obey in all things. (31.) If I could produce no evidence of the power that I claim besides my own assertion, you would be justified in disregarding my pretensions. (32.) But I have a witness in my favour whom you yourselves respect, and the testimony that he bore is confirmed by such facts as both myself and you are well acquainted with, especially the visible descent of the spirit of God upon me at my baptism. (33.) Not content with what John said of his own accord, you sent a solemn deputation to him, demanding to know what his pretensions were ; and upon that occasion he solemnly renounced all claim to being the Messiah, referring to me as one who was to come immediately after him. (34.) This evidence I allege as what will have weight with yourselves, and may be expected to make a good impression upon you ; and indeed John was a distinguished prophet, and at first you were disposed to receive all that he delivered. (35.) But this is not the evidence on which I lay the principal stress. The most decisive proof of my mission from God is those miraculous works which no man could perform but by the immediate power of God ; who alone, being the author of nature, can controul the laws of it. These works bear witness that the Father has sent me.

(36.) But besides this, I can appeal to a still more direct testimony from God, at the delivery of which many of you were present. Do you not recollect that at my baptism a voice was heard, proceeding from God himself, saying, (*Matt. iii. 17.*) “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ” ? Was not this as distinct and evident as the voice of God from Mount Sinai at the giving of the law of Moses ? Did you not both hear the *words*, and likewise perceive the *form*, by which the descent of the spirit upon



me was signified ; for all this passed in open day-light, and before crowds of people ?

(38.) But the true reason why you disregard the testimony of God in this instance, is your disregard to the authority and precepts of God in other instances, especially in things of the most importance, those of a moral nature, which argues a mind biassed by criminal affections and lusts ; and these shut the heart against the reception of divine truth.

(39.) A proof of your wilful obstinacy and blindness of heart is, that, though the Scriptures testify concerning me, and you study them, and profess the highest regard for them, you still refuse to come to me. (40.) I well know the principles by which you are actuated, and it is not a principle of love to God, and respect to his authority by whose spirit the Scriptures were dictated ; and therefore you reject me as the Messiah, refuse to receive my doctrine, even though you would thereby receive that salvation which the prophets have promised you under me. (41.) But your minds are so dazzled with the things of this world, that nothing will content you but a temporal and triumphant Messiah, and I disclaim all worldly honours. My kingdom is not of this world, and ye are of the world.

(43.) So great a difference does this circumstance alone make, that though I have the most undeniable evidence of a divine power accompanying me ; yet, assuming no worldly distinctions, you will not on any account admit of my pretensions to be the Messiah. Whereas, let others come promising you worldly glory and power, and you will receive them without any proper evidence whatever. (44.) It is impossible that you should receive such a Messiah as you see me to be, while you are so much attached to the things of this world, so fond of worldly honours, and so averse to that humility and self-denial which my religion requires.

(45.) Do not think that I say this from malice and resentment, and that I shall accuse you on this account to my Father. If I did bear you so much ill-will, I should have no occasion to do this. Moses, of whom you boast, will himself be your accuser ;\* for though he wrote concerning me, you have not been moved by what he wrote. (47.) If you believe not his writings, the authority of which you acknowledge, how should you believe in me ?

\* "Moses, their great lawgiver, is represented as looking down with indignation upon these *elders*, who gloried in being the most distinguished of his disciples ; and seeing how injuriously they treated Jesus the great *Prophet*, turning himself to God with a severe accusation against them, and urging his own predictions as an aggravation of their inexcusable infidelity." *Doddridge, Sect. xlviii. (Note i).*

## SECTION XLI.

*Jesus discourses with the Pharisees concerning Traditions.*

*Matt. xv. 1—20; Mark vii. 1—23; John vii. 1.*

*Matt. xv. 1.* So great was the offence that Jesus had given by curing a lame man on the sabbath day, and by his conversation with the Jews afterwards on the subject of his mission, that they came to a resolution to take his life, and on this account we are informed by John (vii. 1) that *he went into Galilee*, not choosing to make any longer stay in *Judea*. We now, therefore, after the Feast of Pentecost, attend him again into Galilee, where we find some of the *Scribes and Pharisees* sent to watch him, no doubt with a view to find some accusation against him.

2. These Scribes and Pharisees having no pretence for accusing Jesus of breaking the laws of God, charge him with transgressing the traditions of the elders, on some of which they laid equal stress. Thus we are told with respect to this very tradition of always washing the hands before eating,\* about which we find nothing in the books of Moses, or in the prophets, that the *Rabbi Akiba* being in prison, and not having water enough brought to him both to wash and to drink, chose to do the former, saying, it was better to die of thirst than to neglect such a custom, and this is mentioned by Jewish writers as a high encomium of him.

3. They charged Jesus with transgressing the commands *of man*, acknowledging them to be such. What force, therefore, is there in his recrimination of them, that they transgressed the commands *of God*;† and how could he condemn their traditions more effectually, than by saying they were contrary to the commands of God, which was true of some of them?

5. The Jews imagined that some forms of affirming or denying, were of more force than others, and among these they thought the use of the word *corban*, [*Mark vii. 11,*]

\* "The masters ordained that before any men who professed to observe the law with care, ate common bread, they should wash their hands; but they allowed them to eat *dry fruits* with unwashed hands." See *Maimonides*, in Dr Wotton's *Discourses*, 1718, I. p. 166, Note.

† "Our Lord, instead of directly answering the question of the *Pharisees*, refutes it effectually, by proposing another. Upon people of this description, Jesus thought it prudent to impose silence, when he could not impress conviction." Wakefield, p. 219.



or which was more common with them in later ages, *conam*, to be of this binding nature; so that if they said to any person, Let whatever I could give you be *corban*, or *conam*, whatever natural or moral obligation they were otherwise under to give, it was then not lawful for them to do it; and the Jewish books abound with these nice distinctions concerning it.\* By this expression they did not mean that they actually devoted their substance to any sacred use, so as to give it to the Temple, or the public, and thereby alienate it from their own use; for it was only a rash oath, that what they had to give should be no more the property of him who asked for it, than if it had been given to God.

6. *Honour not his father and his mother.* That is, Do not assist and maintain them. This is the meaning of *honouring widows, that are widows indeed*, in Paul's Epistles, [1 Tim. v. 3]. So also *worthy of double honour*, [ver. 17,] and of a double stipend, are synonymous.†

7. That is, what *Isaiah* said of the people of his age, might with truth be applied to you.‡

10. Hitherto Jesus had been addressing himself to the learned Scribes and Pharisees, who had come from Jerusalem for the purpose of watching him. He now takes occasion to address himself in an emphatical manner to the common people, who were present, and to give them a most important lesson of instruction.

11. As it appears that Jesus's own disciples did not understand his meaning in this expression, it is probable that the people did not. But it was such a saying as they would not easily forget, and the form of it might lead them to think more about it; so that it would make the deeper impression when, by farther inquiry, they did come to understand it.

16. By this it should seem that Jesus thought that what he had said was sufficiently intelligible; and considering the circumstances in which he delivered himself, we cannot help wondering that they could see any difficulty in it. But Jesus had been used to speak enigmatically, and had a farther meaning than appeared at first; and therefore his disciples wished that he would explain himself more fully, that they might have no doubt of his meaning.

20. There cannot be a more important lesson than this,

\* See Wakefield, pp. 219—221.

† On vers. 3—6, see Wotton, l. pp. 60—62; Pearce, l. p. 108.

‡ See *Isaiah* xxix. 13, especially in the LXX.; Pearce, l. p. 108; Vol. XII. p. 186; Wakefield, pp. 221, 224.

that nothing defiles a man, or makes him to be considered as *unclean* in the sight of God, but something of an immoral nature, something that arises from the heart, as a man's inward temper or disposition. All external actions flow from what is conceived in the heart, and derive their turpitude from that; so that if the heart be right, or a man's meaning and intention be good, he can never do what is in the sight of God wrong. But when our Saviour says that nothing entering into a man defileth him, we are not to understand that a Jew, to whom certain meats were absolutely forbidden by the laws of Moses, might eat any thing. That would have been to transgress the laws of God, against which he was cautioning them, and to which both himself, the apostles, and all the Christian Jews, strictly conformed. The meaning of Jesus must be explained by the occasion of his discourse, which related only to the washing of hands before every meal; as if meat not eaten in those circumstances was unclean; whereas Jesus asserts that nothing eaten in this manner, if proper to be eaten at all, could make a man unclean. But the penalty of doing any thing presumptuously against the laws of God, though in itself ever so innocent, was, by the laws of Moses, being *cut off from his people*.

Had Jesus, who expressly says *he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it*,\* declared the abolition, or the insignificance, of the laws of Moses respecting meats, or any thing else, it could not but have excited the greatest alarm. The apostles themselves would have been staggered at it, and would, no doubt, have questioned him about it. It is evident, therefore, that they did not understand him to have any such meaning.

*Mark vii. 9. Full well ye reject the commandment of God.*† The word *καλως* properly signifies *finely*, or *excellently*; so that it looks as if our Lord spoke ironically upon this occasion.‡

19. *Purging all meats.* *Pearce* thinks that *Mark* wrote *καθαρίζοντα* (that is, *αφεδρώνοντα*) *παντα τα βρωματα*, referring to the bowels, where the proper juices are secreted from the aliments.

\* See *Matt. v. 17, supra*, p. 74.

† "Ye entirely reject." *Theol. Repos. IV. p. 30. (P.) Wakefield's Notes*, p. 33; *N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 321.*

‡ See *Le Cene*, pp. 467, 468; *Essay*, 1727, p. 131; *Bowyer*, p. 23; *Pearce*, I. p. 239.



## PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* xv. (14.) He replied, I am not concerned at their resentment. Every addition which those men have made to the law of God, it is my business to extirpate, and it shall certainly be done. As to those who are willing to delude, or to be deluded, there is no remedy for them.

## SECTION XLII.

*The Favour shewn by Jesus to the Syro-Phœnician Woman, and the Cure of the Person who was deaf, and had an Impediment in his Speech.*

*Matt.* xv. 21—31 ; *Mark* vii. 24—37.

*MATT.* xv. 21. Hitherto Jesus had confined himself to the most populous parts of *Galilee*, in the neighbourhood chiefly of *Capernaum*. We now find him making an excursion to the northern extremity of the country bordering upon *Tyre and Sidon*, which was inhabited by the remains of the people of Canaan, who had been expelled by Joshua. Here it was that, being powerful, they at one time oppressed the Israelites ; when, being commanded by Sisera, they were defeated by Deborah and Barak.\* At this time the country was considered a part of Syria, or of Phœnicia, which was comprehended in it.

22. Though this woman is here called a *Canaanite*, and by *Mark* [vii. 26] a *Syro-Phœnician*, from the country which she inhabited, it does not follow that she was an idolater. Many persons living in and near Judea were worshippers of the true God, though they did not in all things conform to the customs of the Jews, so as to become proper proselytes. Her confidence in our Saviour's power was certainly equal to that of any Jew, or any of his disciples, and that power was always considered as the power of the God of the Jews.

By being *vexed with a demon*, I have often remarked, we are to understand being afflicted with some of those diseases which are usually ascribed to the influence of demons, or evil spirits, possessing men, and especially disordering their understandings, such as madness, lunacy, epilepsy, &c. &c.

\* See *Judges* iv. 14—16.

Such is the universal opinion of the people in the East to this day, and we are not to wonder if the writers of the New Testament, or our Saviour himself, should have adopted the same. The power of God was not the less, but the more conspicuous, when the person by whose word a disease was cured was ignorant of the nature of it.

23. Jesus giving this woman no answer, we shall presently see, was to try her faith and patience, how long she would persist in her importunity, notwithstanding his seeming neglect of her. This, however, is not the only case in which Jesus remained silent, when he was expected to speak; and it is possible that, surrounded as he probably was by a crowd, to one or other of whom he might be giving attention, he might not be particularly struck with this woman's clamour.

24. As Jesus did finally relieve this woman, it is evident either that what he said was to be understood with some allowance, or that he exceeded the strict bounds of his commission.\* It is probable that, like *Bartimeus*, she had been very troublesome to the attendants of Jesus by her loud cries, so that they earnestly wished that he would dismiss her with some answer or other; for they did not request that he would satisfy her, but only *send her away*. But his answer rather implies that he understood them to wish that he would relieve her, and to this he was not bound, especially as she was not of Jewish extraction. He had, however, cured the servant of a Roman centurion at Capernaum, and therefore this was no new case. We find also that, though the commission of Jesus was to the Jews, he occasionally preached to the Samaritans. All this would tend to lessen the prejudices of our Lord's disciples against persons of other nations, and prepare them to preach the gospel to all the world without distinction, at a proper time.

26. To appearance this language was highly offensive, but it is possible that notwithstanding the words, there might be something in Jesus's manner of delivering them that was not absolutely forbidding. It was common with the Jews to speak of themselves as the *children* of God's family, and of other nations as *dogs*† belonging to it. This was, no doubt, well known to this woman, and therefore would not be new, or particularly offensive. Or Jesus might

\* "Our Lord's personal ministry was confined to Judea and the Jews; nor were his apostles commissioned to proclaim the gospel either to *Gentile idolaters*, or to *proselytes of the gate*, until some time after his ascension." Wakefield, p. 224.

† See *Philipp.* iii. 2; *Rev.* xxii. 15; *Pearce*, I. p. 110; *Wakefield*, pp. 224, 225.



speaking in such a manner as to give no offence at all, or even in such a manner as to reprove the Jews who were present for using such language; so much depends upon the manner in which words are spoken.

27. That there was nothing particularly offensive in Jesus's using this language, may perhaps be inferred from this woman's not being offended at it. She was so far from being discouraged, with respect to her request, that she had the presence of mind to avail herself of it, and thence to plead some right to the relief she requested; for though the children had the *bread*, yet the dogs, she observed, got such *crumbs*, or fragments, as the children had to spare.\*

28. This case is very similar to that of our Lord's curing the servant of the Roman centurion at Capernaum, as he was at a distance from both the diseased persons at the time of their cure, and as the faith of the persons who applied to him was so great as to draw from him a particular encomium. In these two instances of cures performed *at a distance*, it is evident that there could be no artifice, or any thing preconcerted with the persons concerned.

*Mark vii. 32.* These two disorders necessarily go together; for when persons are born *deaf*, they cannot in the usual way be taught to *speak*.

33. There was a great variety, for which we cannot discover any reason, in the methods in which our Lord cured diseases. In general, it was by merely pronouncing the cure, and even sometimes, as we have seen, when the diseased persons were at a distance from him; but sometimes he used particular applications, as if he wished it to be understood that the cure was effected by some medical treatment, as when he made clay with his spittle, and with it anointed the eyes of the man who was born blind. But though before he was sufficiently known this method of performing the cure might have that appearance, yet after so many other cures unquestionably miraculous, it could have no such effect.

34. It is evident by our Lord's *looking up to heaven* on this occasion, and by his devout prayer before the raising of Lazarus, [*John xi. 41, 42,*] that he always secretly implored the Divine assistance, whenever he wrought any miracle, and that he had some impression upon his mind, which intimated to him that his prayer was granted, before he ven-

\* "The woman's answer is extremely sensible and pertinent, dexterously continued under the same *figure of speech*." *Wakefield*, p. 225.

tured to pronounce a cure. Indeed he expressly said that *of himself he could do nothing*, and that *the Father who was in him*, or acted by him, *did those wonderful works*. [John xiv. 10.] What little pretence, then, have any to say that Christ assumed to himself the power of God! No man could give less ground for such an impious accusation than he did.

36. The reason of our Lord's enjoining silence in this particular case, might be his near approach to Capernaum, and the more populous part of the country of Galilee, where he was already so well known, that he had on a former occasion been obliged to withdraw himself from the multitudes that crowded after him.

*Matt.* xv. 30. The most astonishing of all these cures was that of those who are called *maimed*; for there can be no doubt but that the word means persons who wanted some limb, as a leg or an arm, &c.\* and consequently the cure must have been performed by restoring to them, or new creating the limb that was wanting. We have no particulars, however, of any cure of this kind, no mention being made of any particular limb that was wanting, and that was restored in any of the cases.

31. Christians of later ages have inferred from the miracles of Jesus that he was *God*, performing them by a power that was properly *his own*. But we see that the persons who saw these miracles drew no such inference from them at the time; for on this occasion we see that *they glorified*, not Jesus, but *the God of Israel*, whom they evidently supposed to have acted by him, just as they would have done in the case of any other prophet, who should have done the same things; for they readily conceived that *the power* was not that of any man, but that of *God*. As Nicodemus observed, [*John* iii. 2,] *no man could do those miracles, if God had not been with him*. On occasion of another of his miracles we read, [*Matt.* ix. 8,] that the persons who saw it *wondered that God had given such power unto men*, and therefore they concluded that *God had visited his people*, meaning by the mission of another prophet, and not by himself becoming incarnate, being born, living and dying like a common man; for of this, no Jew had ever any idea. They never hear it mentioned without abhorrence.

\* See Mr. Thomas Ray's "Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles," in answer to Woolston's *Five Discourses*, 1727, (p. 25,) in *Hallett*, II. pp. 203, 204; *Wakefield*, p. 227.



## SECTION XLII.

*Jesus feeds Four Thousand Persons, discourses about a Sign from Heaven, and cures a blind Man.*

*Matt.* xv. 32—39 ; *xvi.* 1—12 ; *Mark* viii. 1—26 ;  
*Luke* xii. 54—57.

WE are still attending Jesus in the circuit that he made through the northern parts of Galilee, in the territories of Philip, the brother of Herod ; and it is somewhat remarkable that we have here an account of a repetition of the most stupendous miracle of feeding a great number of persons with a small quantity of provision, which is proof of a power equal to that by which all things were first created, and shews that no length of time is necessary to the work of creation.\* If both these miracles had not been related by the same evangelists, and also been distinctly referred to by Jesus himself, the difference in the other circumstances would hardly have led us to suppose that they had been really different, especially as they were performed in the same part of the country ; for this transaction appears from the circumstances to have been in that part of Galilee which lies to the east of the Sea of Tiberias, and in the northern part of it ; for it was immediately upon his return from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon ; and after it he departed to the coast of *Magdala*, which is in the southern part of that region.

32. On this, as on former similar occasions, we discover marks of the feeling, compassionate temper of Jesus. This display of extraordinary power did not proceed from a principle of ostentation, but from humanity, besides his general object of giving sufficient evidence of his divine mission.

33. It is rather extraordinary that the disciples, who knew what their Master had done in these very circumstances, should put the same question to him now that they did then. But it appears that they often did not give sufficient attention to what he said or did. He complains of their *hardness of*

\* A learned commentator on the miraculous provision for Elijah, (1 *Kings* xix. 6,) exclaims, “ Demandera-t-on encore ici, dans quel lieu l’Ange prit la *phiole pleine d’eau*, et le *gâteau* qu’il porta à Elie ? Mais pourquoi ne pas demander aussi où Jésus-Christ prit tout ce pain, avec le quel il nourrit les troupes dans deux occasions rapportées par les Evangelistes ? La puissance de Dieu a-t-elle des bornes ? Et ces productions lui content-elles davantage que l’arrangement de cet univers ? ” *M. Roques*, I. p. 436.

*heart*, on which a sufficient impression had not been made by these very miracles, as we shall see presently. But they probably asked the question very hastily, before they had given themselves time to reflect at all, and in this case it is not surprising that any particular thought should be absent from the mind.\*

36—38. That the history of this miracle is no invention of the evangelist's, is sufficiently evident from the circumstances of it; for it is less in magnitude than the preceding, the number of persons fed being less, the quantity of provisions greater, and yet what remained was not so much. Whereas had the story been the invention of the writers, they would hardly have related a miracle of the same kind with another preceding it, without making some advances upon it, so that the latter should have appeared the more wonderful of the two.

xvi. 1. It is evident that though Jesus made no open pretension to his being the Messiah, the people in general had entertained the idea that he might be the person. The Pharisees and chief priests certainly neither wished nor believed him to be the Messiah; and it was probably to undeceive the people that they here, as upon another occasion, demanded of him to shew them that *sign from heaven*, which is mentioned in *Daniel*, [vii. 13,] who says *that the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven*; for as Jesus did not make his first appearance in that splendid manner, they concluded that he never would, and therefore they probably made this proposal in a sneering or insulting manner, here called *tempting him*.

2,† 3. Here our Lord enumerates the signs of *fair and foul weather* in that country, with which every body was well acquainted, and therefore he justly blames these wise Pharisees for giving less attention to the signs of something much more important, viz. the approach of *the kingdom of God*, for which they were looking: for as Jesus wrought so many miracles, and none had been wrought, or pretended to be wrought, in that country for several centuries before his time, and as few or no persons before *John the Baptist* had ever assumed the character of a prophet, without working miracles, they might naturally have concluded that there was something very important, as well as very extraordinary in all this; and whether it denoted the speedy coming of

\* See *supra*, p. 152; *Wakefield*, p. 227.

† "Virgil mentions the same sign of stormy weather, *Geo. i. 454.*" *Ibid.* p. 229.



the *Messiah* or not, it was a proof that God had again begun to send prophets, and, as it is elsewhere expressed, was *visiting his people*; and no doubt for some great purpose or other, which demanded their particular attention.

4. *Mark* [viii. 12] says upon this occasion that *there shall no sign be given*;\* and according to *Matthew*, Jesus said nothing to explain *the sign of the prophet Jonah*. But upon a former occasion he had added that *as Jonah was three days and three nights* (or some part of three days) *in the belly of the fish*, so he should be the same time *in the heart of the earth*; which was a pretty clear intimation that he should lie in the grave so long, and no longer. This, therefore, he made the test of his being the *Messiah*: for he gives the Pharisees this sign instead of that which they had demanded; and the sign that they demanded was as a test of his being the *Messiah*.

6—11. We have here one of the many instances in which our Lord spake figuratively and enigmatically, taking hints from sensible objects. The apostles probably imagined that when he bade them *beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*, when they wanted bread, he intended to intimate that they should not buy any bread of them, and they might not know where to procure any; and he reproaches them for their solicitude on that subject, when they knew by experience that he was able to supply their wants, and give them bread, without money.

*Luke* xii. 54, 55. Dr. Shaw says that the westerly winds in the Holy Land are still generally attended with rain, but that the easterly winds are usually dry.† *Le Bruyn* says, “when he was at *Rama*, there was a south-east wind, which, coming from the desert beyond Jordan, caused a great heat, and that this continued some days.”‡

*Mark* viii. 22—26. This is another instance of Jesus’s curing a person with some previous application, and also in a more private manner than usual, for which it is not easy to imagine any sufficient reason. He could hardly intend to make this man believe that he was cured without a miracle. It is evident, however, that he did not choose to work this miracle in the town of *Bethsaida*, the inhabitants of which he had reproached for their unbelief. He would not honour them with what they had despised, or with which they had

\* Εἰ δοθῇσεται. An elliptical form of expression, equivalent to an oath: as if he said, *As I speak the truth, no sign shall be given*, &c. *Pearce*. (P.)

† See *Harmer*, p. 329. (P.) *Ibid.* III. pp. 16, 17.

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 61. (P.)

not been sufficiently impressed. He even enjoined this man not to speak of his cure in the town, and for any thing that appears, he did observe the injunction that was laid upon him.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* xvi. (9,) *Mark* viii. (16.) How could you imagine that I was talking to you about a stock of bread for our use, and laying so much stress upon that circumstance? Have you already forgot my late miracles of the multiplication of food, and do you not consider how easy it must be for me to supply our wants in the same manner upon any emergency?

### SECTION XLIV.

*Jesus begins to foretell his Sufferings.*

*Matt.* xvi. 13—28; *Mark* viii. 27—38; ix. 1;  
*Luke* ix. 18—27.

WE have attended Jesus through one excursion to the northern parts of Galilee. We now find him once more, and for the last time, in those parts, in the territory of *Philip*, and here we have a very remarkable conversation with his disciples about his character, whether he was the Messiah or not. It is remarkable that this is the first time that he discoursed with them on the subject, though he had now preached publicly near four months, and, according to the common opinion, between two and three years. This, in the circumstances in which Jesus was, was a very delicate subject, and therefore he entered upon it with none but his disciples; probably the apostles only were present. Till this time he had left not only the Jews in general, but even his own disciples, to infer *who he was*, from his works and his conduct, and had not thought proper to make any express declaration on the subject.

*Matt.* xvi. 13. This *Cæsarea Philippi* was a town built, or much enlarged, by Philip, and called *Cæsarea*, in honour of the Roman emperor Augustus Cæsar; but to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea, which had been built by Herod the Great, it was called *Cæsarea Philippi*.\*

There must have been, no doubt, much speculation among the Jews in general concerning Jesus; as he not only ap-

\* See *Jos. Antiq.* B. xviii. Ch. ii. Sect. i.; B. xx. Ch. viii. Sect. iv.; *Pearce*, l. p. 114.



peared to be a prophet, but one of an extraordinary kind, performing more miracles than any preceding prophet, and after an interval of some hundred years, in which there had been no pretensions to miracles or prophecy.

It is evident that the phrase *Son of Man*, here used by Jesus, did not necessarily mean the *Messiah*, because he was then asking the disciples whom they took him to be. In *Mark* [viii. 27] and *Luke* [ix. 18] it is only *who do men say* [or *who say the people*] *that I am?* And therefore some have thought that the addition *son of man*,\* in *Matthew*, being superfluous, was not used by Jesus on this occasion. It is, indeed, not easy to say why Jesus should use this expression as he does. In the *Old Testament*, the phrase *son of man* generally signifies nothing more than *man*. If that was the idea here, it may be thus paraphrased:—Whom do men say that I, who in other respects am evidently a man like themselves, am? How am I distinguished from other men?—But as the phrase *son of man* is peculiarly applied to the latter prophets *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, it may signify a man particularly distinguished by God, as they were, or a *prophet*, and then it may be paraphrased thus: As the people must conclude that I am a prophet, what prophet, or what kind of prophet, do they suppose me to be?

Perhaps it ought to be rendered, *Who do men say that I am? Do they say I am the son of man*, i. e. *the Messiah?*†

14. Considering the great respect that the people in general had for *John the Baptist*, it is plain that Jesus had never been announced by him to be the *Messiah*: for then they would have had no doubt on the subject; and least of all would they ever have imagined that John himself was the *Messiah*.‡ They who could not think that Jesus was the *Messiah*, on account of his not coming in the clouds of heaven, might naturally imagine that he was sent before him, and therefore was *Elias*.

The conjecture that Jesus might be *Jeremiah*,§ is not mentioned by *Mark* or *Luke*; but it is possible that, as some Jews imagined that *Jeremiah* would appear in the time of the *Messiah*, to discover the place of the ark of the covenant,

\* “A term of humiliation, and of Hebrew origin, and therefore not used by either *Mark* or *Luke* in the parallel passages.” Wakefield, p. 231.

† *Jebb*. (P.) See *Luke* xvii. 22; *Bowyer*, p. 10.

‡ “They who supposed *Jesus* to be *John the Baptist*, must either have thought, like *Herod*, that *John* was risen again, or that the soul of *John* was now animating the body of *Jesus*.” Wakefield, p. 231.

§ “Grotius observes, that the *Hebrews*, as appears from their writings, expected the return of *Jeremiah*; and that some of them thought his soul animated *Zechariah*: as that of *Phinehas*, in their opinion, revived in *Elijah*.” See *ibid*. pp. 231, 232.

which had been in the Temple of Solomon, but was not in that which was built afterwards, they might think that he would rise from the dead, and appear together with Elias. It is remarkable that, among all these different opinions, the apostles should not observe, that some thought Jesus to be the Messiah, which it is evident that many did. But this being their own secret opinion, or fond hope, and expecting great advantages to themselves from it, they might not choose to mention it, as it would declare their own ambitious views.

We see, on this occasion, how familiar to the Jews was the idea of a resurrection. They did not think that the souls of those *prophets* inhabited the body of Jesus, but thought him to be one of the men themselves risen from the dead.

15. It is evident, from this question, that the disciples of Jesus had never been expressly informed, either by *John the Baptist*, or by *Jesus*, that he was the *Messiah*: for then it would have been altogether impertinent. This is a great confirmation of the opinion advanced, and ably supported, by Mr. Palmer, that John himself did not know that Jesus was the Messiah, but only that he was a greater prophet than himself.\*

17. This was not probably any proper revelation from God to Peter. If it had, there would have been no ground for so particular a commendation as Jesus bestows upon him. But the opinion that he expressed arose from his own reflections.† His mind being free from those prejudices which led the Scribes and Pharisees, who were worldly-minded men, to conclude that Jesus could not be the Messiah, Peter was not hindered by the same appearances, viz. that of his not assuming kingly power, to form a truer judgment than they did.

18. *Gates of death.* Public assemblies and consultations were held near the gates of cities; so that the phrase means that the wisdom and devices of those who have the power of death shall not prevail against Christianity, or, in other words, the religion of Christ shall never be extinct in the world; and certainly there is far from being any prospect of its ever being so.‡

19. *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.* The power of *binding and loosing* may signify the

\* See *supra*, p. 39.

† See the Author's "Essays on Inspiration" (No. iii.), *Theol. Repos.* IV. pp. 200, 201; *Wakefield* in *ibid.* V. pp. 185, 186; *Lardner*, VI. p. 513; *Wakefield*, p. 232.

‡ See *ibid.* pp. 232—234.



power that devolved upon the apostles, of making regulations respecting the Christian church after our Lord's ascension, or a power which they exercised when assembled at Jerusalem on the subject of eating things forbidden by the law of Moses. But perhaps these words may not denote any power to be exerted at the discretion of Peter, or the other apostles; but only the power of God, or of the gospel that was committed to them.\* God says to *Jeremiah* (i. 10), "See, I have this day set thee over the nations;—to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down; to build and to plant;" when all that was meant was, that God would commission him from time to time to foretell the fates of particular nations, and nothing at all was left to his discretion in the case. A like interpretation may serve for *John* xx. 23, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

A *key* was given to the steward of a family, as an emblem of his office.†

20. Notwithstanding Jesus's acknowledgment that he was the *Messiah*, he thought proper strictly to enjoin his disciples not to make it public, that is, as his own declaration. The reason of this evidently was, that he might not be brought under great and unnecessary difficulties, both with respect to the Jews and the Romans; for in the opinion of both it would have been considered as the same thing with making himself a king. The apostles, however, would naturally infer from it, that at some proper future time he would appear as a temporal prince, and in this opinion he chose that they should continue. They were not then prepared to understand the doctrine of a Messiah, who, though he might suffer, was not also to reign like other princes.

21, 22. ‡ After the acknowledgment of Jesus that he was the *Messiah*, nothing could have appeared more improbable than that he should be put to death: for though it is said in *Daniel* [ix. 26] that the Messiah was to *be cut off*, it is plain that no Jew had so understood it. However, as Jesus said that he should *be raised again*, his being put to death was not

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 284—286. "*Binding* was commonly understood by the Jews at that time, to be a declaration that any thing was unlawful to be done, and *loosing* signified a declaration that any thing might be lawfully done. Our Saviour spoke to his disciples in a language which they understood." *Lightfoot* in *Wotton*, I. p. 309. "Binding and loosing occur no where in the N. T. but in Matthew." *Ibid.* p. 311. See *Pearce*, I. p. 116.

† See *Wakefield*, pp. 234—236.

‡ See *Le Cene*, pp. 550, 551; *Pearce*, I. p. 117; *Wakefield*, p. 238.

absolutely inconsistent with his being a king. But the apostles did not see any reason for his being put to death at all, if, after this, he was so soon to come to life again.

23. How different is the language in which Jesus speaks of Peter upon his acknowledging him to be the Messiah,\* and his expressing an aversion to the idea of his suffering, though they both proceeded from a principle of respect to his Master! But it is evident that when Peter expressed his aversion to the sufferings of Jesus, he had no idea of his being himself a sufferer in his cause, though on many occasions Jesus had fully apprized all his disciples of the necessity of this, and of their being prepared for it. He therefore takes this occasion of solemnly forewarning them of it again.

We see here that by the word *Satan*, which is synonymous to *Devil*, our Saviour did not mean any great invisible being, the rival of Almighty God, which is the idea that mankind generally have of the devil, but any thing that was *evil*: for here he calls *Peter* himself *Satan*,† as before he had called *Judas* the *Devil*, being men under the influence of improper thoughts or passions.

26. Here our Lord urges the great importance of all his followers being prepared to suffer as he should do. And if his disciples had not shewn their faith in his mission by dying for it, Christianity could never have been established in the world. It has been justly said, that *the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church*. To secure a future immortal life we ought not to hesitate, if we be called to it, to give up the present transitory life.

That the word in the original should be rendered *life*,‡ and not *soul*, is evident from its being the very same that is used in the preceding verse, where it is rendered, *whosoever will save his life shall lose it*. If the word signified *soul* as a thing distinct from the body, it ought to have been rendered, *whosoever will save his soul shall lose it*; it is plain, therefore, that by *life* Jesus here meant not *mere existence*, for the wicked shall exist after the resurrection as well as the righteous, but an endless and happy life; and therefore, when upon another occasion he says [*Matt. x. 28*] that *God can destroy both the body and the soul*, or the life of the body,

\* "How soon is Peter, *the rock*, turned to an adversary!" *Pearce*, I. p. 117. See *Wakefield*, p. 233.

† A learned believer in the personality of the *Devil* proposes to translate, *adversary* "par ce que le nom *Satan* appartient au Diable, et qu'il n'y a pas d'apparence que le Sauveur ait voulu ainsi qualifier son disciple." *Le Cene*, p. 6.

‡ "As in ver. 25 and in *Ch. ii. 20* and *x. 39*. Agreeably to which, *Luke (ix. 25)* says, 'lose himself.' " *Pearce*, I. p. 117. See *Wakefield*, pp. 238, 239.



*in hell*, he meant that he could subject him to a *second death*, or make him miserable in a future state.

28. It is plain, from this passage, that Jesus had no idea of his coming in glory, or *in his kingdom*, except to raise the dead and judge the world;\* and therefore it is probable that at this time he himself expected that this glorious event would take place sooner than it has appeared to do. The destruction of Jerusalem did happen in that generation, as he himself distinctly foretold, which sufficiently proves that he was a true prophet; but he might think his coming in glory would be presently after that event, and this might lead the apostles and the early Christians in general to expect the near approach of the second coming of Christ. This mistake might be wisely permitted in the course of Divine Providence, as the minds of the primitive Christians might have been too much staggered at the idea of the very great *distance* of that important event, the *certainty* of which was all that Jesus himself had been informed of, for as to the time of it he expressly said [*Matt.* xxiv. 36, *Mark* xiii. 32] that it was not known to himself, but *to the Father only*; so that on this subject it is evident that he had been left to his own conjectures, and how strongly soever he might have expressed his *opinion* on the subject, he had sufficiently apprized his disciples that it could be no other than his private opinion, and not any thing that he was authorized by God to declare, as from him.

*Mark* viii. 38. *Adulterous generation*. It does not necessarily follow, from this expression, that the Jews were particularly guilty of adultery, though in this literal sense the censure would be abundantly justified by Josephus's account of the morals of the Jews in his time; but the Jewish nation being figuratively represented by the ancient prophets as in a *marriage contract* with God, every sin was, in the same figurative style, a breach of that contract.

*Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, &c.* I would recommend this awful warning to the particular consideration of Christians in this age, in which so many persons of eminence in the world, and especially in literature and philosophy, are sceptics and unbelievers, and in which, therefore, the temptation to be ashamed of the Christian name is, in some circumstances, peculiarly strong. In this situation it is highly criminal to deny, or conceal, our real belief of Christianity, or whatever we consider as belonging to it.

\* See *Lardner*, II. pp. 426, 427; *Wakefield*, p. 239.

And thankful we ought to be that this is the greatest part of the persecution that we have at this day to expect. Our ancestors had much greater trials.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* xvi. (17.) This conviction of my being the Messiah comes from a better principle than the generality of the Jews are influenced by, and must have arisen from an upright, unprejudiced mind, which comes from God, the giver of every good and every perfect gift. (18.) I have surnamed thee Peter, which signifies *a rock*, and, in allusion to it, I now assure thee, that upon this rock, upon thy testimony and apostleship, together with that of thy brethren, I will build a church, against which no devices of men shall prevail, but it shall continue till the end of time. (19.) As my principal steward, I will now entrust thee with the keys of my house. At my departure there will be delegated to you the commission under which I now act, so that all future revelations respecting doctrine or discipline, in my church, shall proceed from your authority, and an appeal to you shall be final.

### SECTION XLV.

*The Transfiguration, the Cure of the Demoniac, and the Payment of the Tribute.*

*Matt.* xvii. 1—27; *Mark* ix. 2—32; *Luke* ix. 28—45; xvii. 5, 6.

WE are now come to an event in the history of Jesus, of a very extraordinary and singular kind. But his character and situation were singular, and no doubt required it. It is what is called his *Transfiguration*, probably a kind of specimen of his future glorious appearance, when he should come in his kingdom. That he was sometimes much affected with the prospect of his approaching sufferings, appears from many circumstances; and his apostles, we have lately seen, were greatly staggered at the idea of them. This exhibition, therefore, might be necessary to strengthen their faith, and his own too.

*Matt.* xvii. 1.\* That is, *six days* from the discourse con-

\* Mount Tabor, according to *Prideaux*, Pt. ii.



cerning his sufferings, which had no doubt been the subject of their thoughts and conversation in the mean time.\*

This is the second time that Jesus distinguished these three persons, by making choice of them to be present, when the other apostles were not admitted to attend him. But, it is evident that, whatever might be the reason why he chose no more attendants at these times, it was not on account of any *secrets* that he communicated to them, which would give them any advantage over others; for it does not appear that they had any more knowledge or power than the rest of the apostles. And though upon this occasion these three were enjoined secrecy with respect to what they heard and saw, it was only to continue till his resurrection. Three were quite sufficient as witnesses of the fact; and *Peter*, who was present, has himself recorded it (2 *Ep.* i. 16—18): “For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.” It is evident, from this account, that Peter considered the *Transfiguration* as a representation of what Jesus would be in his glorified state.†

3. *Luke* [ix. 31] adds, that these also *appeared in glory*, and that their discourse was about the *decease which Jesus should accomplish at Jerusalem*, encouraging him no doubt to bear his sufferings, by giving him, in their own persons, a proof of the reality, and likewise of the kind of future life which they themselves enjoyed. As *Moses and Elias* appeared in glory as well as Jesus, there was nothing in this scene that shews Christ to have been more than man. Perhaps it was a splendour reflected from such a bright cloud as had been in former times the symbol of the Divine presence, in consequence of which Moses at one time appeared so resplendent that the people could not bear to look upon him. If this was the case, the three apostles would have the same appearance with Jesus and these two prophets. This, I

\* “The preceding words, the ancients interpret of Christ’s *Transfiguration*, whence they connect the beginning of this chapter with them; as at *Mark* ix. 2, and *Luke* ix. 27.” D. *Heinsius* in *Bowyer*, p. 10.

† On “some of the ends which this *Transfiguration* might probably be designed to answer,” see *Wakefield*, pp. 241, 242.

think, was probably the case. Whatever this glory was, Peter says that Jesus *received it from God the Father*, as he did every other power by which he was distinguished.

4. *Mark* [ix. 6] adds, "For he knew not what to say, for they were sore afraid." As Mark was the companion of Peter, and is said to have had his accounts from him, this was probably a circumstance communicated to him by this apostle. And no doubt all the three would at first be greatly affected and overpowered by such an appearance as this. The sight of two men, and men so extraordinary as these, raised from the dead, with or without these peculiar circumstances, would be more than many persons would be able to support.

5. This *cloud* was similar to that which had been the token of the Divine presence from the time of Moses; and it is so mentioned in the *Old Testament*, that it could not but have been well understood by the apostles. On several occasions an articulate voice, as from God, had been heard, proceeding from such a cloud. This is the second time that Jesus had been honoured by this attestation of his being *the beloved Son of God*,\* and by a voice from heaven; the former time being at his baptism, probably in the presence of a great number of persons.

With this *voice* from heaven it is evident that this extraordinary scene closed. *Luke* [ix. 32—34] says, that the voice came *as Moses and Elias departed from Jesus*, and after they had been *heavy with sleep*, exhausted no doubt by the great attention which they had given to what they had seen and heard, which seems to have been of long continuance:† for it does not appear that they made any unnecessary stay upon the Mount, and they did not come down from it till the next day. Indeed the idea of making three tents for the conveniency of *Jesus, Moses and Elias*, would hardly have occurred to Peter in a scene of short continuance, but would naturally enough, after passing the whole night on the top of a mountain, even supposing them to have felt no inconvenience from that circumstance.

9. Had the apostles reported what they had seen, it would have been such a proof of Jesus being the *Messiah*, as would have been attended with much inconvenience; and that

\* See *Wakefield*, p. 245.

† Probably their senses were overpowered with a kind of *stupor*, resembling sleep, but were not really asleep, but capable of giving attention to what passed before them. Matthew and Mark say nothing of this heaviness. Dr. Benson would translate the passage as follows: "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; yet continuing awake, they saw his glory." *Life of Christ*, p. 318. (P.)



these three apostles considered that appearance in that light, is evident from their immediately questioning him concerning *Elias*, who was to make his appearance before the Messiah.

*Mark* [ix. 10] adds, that "they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean;" plainly not understanding Jesus in a literal sense, which would have implied his suffering a literal death, of which it is evident that notwithstanding what Jesus had said on that subject, they did not entertain an idea; for presently after this, we find two of those who were present, James and John, petitioning to sit on his right hand, and on his left, in his kingdom, taking it no doubt to be a proper earthly kingdom, very soon to be set up.

10. It is evident that the apostles did not consider this appearance of *Elias* on the Mount, as that which was to precede the appearance of the Messiah.

11. *Restore all things*; that is, put them into order for the coming of the *Messiah*.\*

It is something remarkable that both *Moses* and *Elijah* had, like *Jesus*, fasted forty days, the one when he gave the law to the Israelites, and the other when he attempted to recover them to a due regard to their law, after a time of great degeneracy. It is observable also, that *Elijah* had been translated to heaven without dying; and if it be said of *Moses* that he *died* in the Mount, to which God called him, yet he went up in perfect health and vigour, nobody was permitted to accompany him, and his place of burial could never be found. It is, therefore, not improbable that he never *properly died*, but was translated also.† Since, however, he was with *Jesus* on the Mount of Transfiguration, in company with *Elijah*, we may presume that they were in the same state, and consequently that *Moses*, as well as *Enoch* and *Elijah*, are now living with *Christ*. Whether these be all his attendants of the human race, where they are, or how they are employed, we cannot tell, and it concerns us not to know. All his faithful disciples and followers will receive the joyful summons to attend him at a proper time.

13. It is clear that before this time the disciples of *Jesus* had no knowledge of *John the Baptist* being *Elias*, and *John*

\* See *Mede*, (Dis. xxv.) pp. 97, 98; *Pearce*, l. p. 120; *Wakefield*, pp. 246, 247.

† See Vol. II. p. 373, Note \*; Vol. XI. pp. 78, 302. This subject is largely discussed (on ver. 3) by *Wakefield*, pp. 242—245.

himself did not know it; for when he was solemnly asked it by a deputation from the Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem, [*John* i. 21,] he denied that he was the *Messiah* or *Elias*. Perhaps Jesus himself, without having had any divine illumination on the subject, might have concluded that John was *Elias*, from himself being the *Messiah*; and there are who think that *Elijah* in person will make his appearance before that *great and terrible day of the Lord*, which is yet to come, and to precede those glorious times, which are the subject of so many prophecies of *Isaiah* and others. But concerning this, and many other things relating to future times, we are, and no doubt wisely, left in the dark. As the primitive Christians, however, were warned by Jesus and the apostles of the approach of the time of distress that was before them, it behoves us also to have an eye to the signs of the times, and if Daniel be a true prophet,\* the times which are to precede the restoration of the Jews to their own country, and which will probably be attended with the fall of the Papal and Turkish powers, will be exceedingly calamitous.†

*Mark* ix. 12. *And that, as it is written, &c.* This rendering, says *Pearce*, is agreeable to the Alexandrian and other MSS., and makes a better sense.‡

13. The clauses of this verse may be transposed and read as follows: *Elias is come, as it is written of him, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed.*§

The clause *as it is written of him*, ought probably to follow the mention of *Elias being come*; his coming only, and not any thing that would be done to him, being foretold by the prophets.

*Matt.* xvii. 14. While Jesus was upon the Mount, on which he was transfigured, accompanied by Peter, James and John, we find the other apostles much embarrassed about the cure of a demoniac, and also in altercation with the Scribes and Pharisees, from which his presence happily relieved them.

*Mark* adds other circumstances, which throw light on this part of the history, and serve to explain the account

\* "Of which none here, I presume, entertain any doubt," added in the *Northumberland* edition, probably as in the Notes delivered from the pulpit.

† *Dan.* xii. 1. "And there shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered." Happy are they who, believing in God and doing his will, are prepared for all events. (*P.*) See Vol. XII. p. 341.

‡ *Com.* I. p. 249. See *Bowyer*, pp. 23, 24.

§ See N. T. 1729, I. p. 156; *Bowyer*, p. 24.



of *Matthew*. He says, (*Chap.* ix. 15, 16,) "And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, saluted him, and he asked the Scribes, Why question ye with them?" What could be the cause of the people's amazement does not appear. But as Jesus had probably spent a whole day and night on the mountain, absent from the greater number of his apostles, their surprise might be at this unusual circumstance; and as he was always performing benevolent actions, they would naturally rejoice to see him again, after their disappointment in not seeing him sooner. The altercation of the Scribes and Pharisees with the disciples might have been occasioned by their failing to relieve the demoniac who had been brought to them, but of the nature of the dispute we are not informed.

15.\* From these circumstances it is most probable that the disease with which this youth was afflicted, was the *epilepsy*,† which, together with other frightful and incurable disorders, were by the Jews and others of that age, ascribed to the influence of evil spirits.

16. Perhaps the disciples had proceeded to this important work without due humility and reverence, commanding the cure in an imperious manner, as ostentatious of their power; and especially without waiting for that peculiar impulse, which was an indication of the power of God accompanying them.

17.‡ The terms *unbelieving* and *perverse*, being our Lord's description of the Pharisees and Scribes, it is probable that these words were not addressed to his disciples, but to those who had been disputing with them. Perhaps as these apostles had not been able to cure this child, these Pharisees had questioned the power of Jesus himself, whose name had no doubt been made use of, in order to perform the cure.

\* "He is a *lunatic*, or labours under the influence of the *moon*. In *ver.* 18, a *demon* is said to occasion his son's disorder; and *Mark* (ix. 17) and *Luke* (ix. 38) attribute it to a *spirit* or *demon*. Therefore we must allow, either that these terms of *lunatic* and *demoniac* are employed by the evangelists in conformity to the popular notions of those times, to signify *madness* or the *epilepsy*, without meaning that the *moon* in one case, or an *evil spirit* in the other, actually tormented these people; or we must confess, not only that the *moon* sometimes took up her station in the human body, as well as *demons*, but also that the *moon* and an *evil spirit* are only different expressions for the same thing." Wakefield, p. 249.

† "See Dr. Mead, *De Imper. Solis et Lunæ*, pp. 35, 43." Pearce, I. p. 120. "That this child's case was epileptic, appears more manifestly from the account given of it by the evangelist, (*Luke* ix. 39,) who was also a physician." Dr. Mead's *Med. Sacr.* C. x. p. 94.

‡ "The expressions of this verse seem to be taken from the LXX.'s version of *Deut.* xxxii. 20." Wakefield, p. 249.

It is not at all probable that Jesus addressed this language to the father of the child, who had from the first behaved with humility and propriety, especially in his answers to the questions that Jesus put to him on the subject, as we have the account in *Mark* ix. 20—24. It is clear from these particulars that there was no perverseness or obstinacy in the father, who had, no doubt, brought his afflicted child with hopes of relief from the power of Jesus,\* and who also prayed that if his own faith was not sufficient to entitle him to the benefit, Jesus would increase it, without perhaps having any distinct idea how that was to be done. But his faith would, no doubt, be increased by Jesus encouraging him.

18. This is a disorder that is never cured except by a treatment of some continuance, and such sorts of the epilepsy as these, are very apt to return after a seeming cure. But of this child, so dreadfully afflicted in this manner, it is said that he was completely cured, by which is implied that there was no return of these fits.

20.† That is, the smallest quantity of this faith would enable them to do the greatest things. But they had proceeded to this miracle without waiting for the divine impulse, which produced this faith.

21. This verse is omitted in some MSS., and in the Ethiopic version.‡

*This kind*, not of demons,§ but of faith,|| (for that is the subject he is speaking of, and blaming the disciples for wanting it,) *goeth not out*, that is, exerteth not itself in such miraculous operations *but by prayer and fasting*, that is, the exercise of fervent devotion.¶

In fact, however, it comes to the same thing, whether we say that such *diseases* cannot be cured but by previous prayer and fasting, or that the *faith* necessary to their miraculous cure cannot be exerted without the same preparation.

Whether *this kind* refers to the demon, or to the *faith* by

\* "From this expostulation," Mr. Turner had conjectured "that the man brought his child to the disciples, not through a belief that the wonderful works which their master performed were wrought by the spirit and power of God, but by some arts which he possessed, and might probably have communicated to them." *Harm.* 1780, p. 120.

† See *Pearce*, l. p. 121; *Wakefield*, pp. 249, 250.

‡ *Ibid.* (P.)

§ Yet see *Lardner*, l. pp. 491, 492; *Garnham* in *Theol. Repos.* V. p. 282.

|| See *Knatchbull* in *Le Cene*, pp. 530—532; *Pearce*, l. p. 121; *Wakefield*, p. 250.

¶ *Turner.* (P.) On this miracle, see Sykes's "Inquiry into the Meaning of Demoniaca in the N. T." Ed. 2, 1737, pp. 39—48; *Bowyer*, p. 10.



which the demons are expelled, the sense is ultimately the same. So important a gift as this of healing those diseases, would not be imparted without prayer; and it is evident, as I have observed before, that prayer, at least mental, always preceded the working of miracles by Jesus himself. We may easily conceive that it would have been highly improper that a power of working miracles of any kind should be so imparted to any man, as to be at his arbitrary disposal, so that he might have exercised it whenever he pleased.

*Luke* xvii. 6. *The sycamore*, Dr. Shaw says,\* is one of the common timber trees of the Holy Land, and from having a larger and more extensive root than most other trees, it is alluded to as the most difficult to be rooted up.

*Matt.* xvii. 22, 23. This is the second time that we have had an account of Jesus distinctly foretelling his sufferings, death and resurrection; but still we find that the apostles did not understand him in the literal sense of his words; for *Mark* (ix. 32) says, "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." Probably they imagined that some great misfortune would befall him, but from which he would soon recover, so as still to appear in the character of a king.

24. By the law of Moses every person was to pay half a shekel annually,† to defray the expenses of the temple service, and the shekel was four *drachmas*, each about eightpence of our money.

26. This *tribute* was paid as it were to God, and therefore Jesus claiming to be the Son of God, might, according to this reasoning, have been exempted.

27. This miracle is of the same nature with that of changing water into wine, walking upon the sea, and stilling the tempest. It shewed the perfect knowledge that Jesus had of events, and the powers that were given him over the laws of nature; for certainly no man, without supernatural communication, could have foretold that any particular fish, that should happen to be caught at any particular time, should have a piece of money, and particularly a piece of a certain value, in its stomach. It may be thought from Jesus working this miracle, that his wants were not abundantly supplied at this particular time. But there are other circumstances that I have mentioned, which shew that our Lord's apostles were not persons in a very low and destitute

\* *Travels*, p. 435. (P.)

† See *Exod.* xxx. 13, 14, Vol. XI. p. 179; *Jos. Antiq.* B. ix. Ch. ix. Sect. i.; *Wakefield*, p. 252.

condition, but were possessed of some property; so that the raising of so small a sum as this could not have been any difficulty to him. Jesus himself probably carried no money, and Peter, who might be then alone with Jesus, might not happen to have any; and a miracle of this kind was calculated to confirm the faith of Peter and the other apostles, in his divine mission, by shewing that they had nothing to dread while they continued attached to him. As he had supplied them with *provisions*, so he could supply them with every thing else that they should want. They might therefore conclude, that if they were left destitute of any thing, it was because it was proper for them to be in those circumstances, and that the cause of the gospel required it; and that it was no proof of a want of power or affection in their Master; for as God gave all things freely to him, so he would to them. As God had sent him into the world, so he sent them into the world, and the glory which God gave to him, he gave to them.

Here the word *offend* probably signifies the same that it usually does in our language, viz. to give occasion to persons to take offence at us, or to be displeased and cavil at our conduct.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matthew* xvi. (26.) If it be customary for princes to take tribute of strangers, and not of their own children, this tax, which is expressly levied for the peculiar service of the Temple, or the house of God, ought not to be levied on the Son of God. I ought, therefore, to be exempted from paying it, but I shall not insist upon this privilege.

### SECTION XLVI.

*Jesus discourses with his Disciples concerning Humility and Forgiveness.*

*Matt.* xviii. 1—35; *Mark* ix. 33—48; *Luke* ix. 46—48; xvii. 1—4; ix. 49, 50.

It is something remarkable that at the very time when Jesus was informing his apostles of his sufferings and death, they should still imagine that he would be a temporal prince; and as such princes must have officers, persons of high rank and power about them, they should be disputing among themselves who should fill them. But we are told that



plainly as he spoke to them on the subject, they really did not understand him in the literal sense of his words; imagining probably that as he was used to speak in parables, and make use of strong figures of speech, he had some figurative meaning in what he said on this subject. And as he spoke of his *resurrection* as soon to follow his *death*, they might imagine that whatever were the difficulties through which he was to pass in the way to his advancement, which difficulties might be signified by his *death*, he would soon surmount them all. And as he speaks of these sufferings as near at hand, they would of course conclude that his advancement to power, which was soon to follow them, was at hand also. Consequently the very discourse which might seem calculated to lower their expectations and lead them to think of *suffering* with their Master, would naturally enough lead them to think of *reigning* with him, and that in this world: for the Jews had no idea of their *Messiah* having any other kingdom than such as David's, whose descendant he was to be.

*Matt.* xviii. 1. *Matthew* here represents the discourse as begun by the disciples; whereas *Mark* [ix. 33] and *Luke* [ix. 47] say that it was begun by Jesus, who, knowing what they had been saying among themselves, spoke to their sentiments and inward feelings.\* The account of *Matthew* is most probable, because he was present, and the misapprehension of the other evangelists is of no consequence.

4. That is, except you divest yourselves of the ambitious views which you now entertain, and of the envy and jealousy of one another, which has occasioned this altercation, and become as free from every thing of the kind as a child, so far will you be from advancement in the kingdom of heaven, that you will not be permitted to enter into it, or to share in any of the blessings of it. In answer to your question, I must therefore inform you that the greatest in my kingdom is he whose temper and disposition shall approach the nearest to this child, which I now set before you.

5, 6. Jesus having represented the disposition of his followers as resembling that of *little children*, and comparing

\* "Whether Peter had then begun to affect a superiority on account of the honour which he had received, (*Ch.* xvi. 17, 18,) or whether Zebedee's two sons, who afterwards (*Ch.* xx. 20) shewed their ambition by their request, had raised this dispute among the apostles, is uncertain; but it is plain that somebody had." *Pearce*, l. p. 123. See *Wakefield*, p. 256.

his disciples to children liable to receive harm, but incapable of inflicting it, forewarns men of the consequence of their behaviour to them : \* for, as he observes upon another occasion, whatever shall be done to them, he will consider as done to himself.

Since the phrase to *receive* and to *offend* are here opposed to each other, it is probable that, though in general the phrase to *offend* means to be the occasion of a fall to another, it sometimes signifies doing them an injury of any other kind, as it seems to do when our Lord says, *lest we offend them*, that is, the Jewish rulers, viz. hurt their prejudices, and thereby give them occasion to be offended at us, and caviil at us.

9. *Offend thee*; i. e. be the occasion of sin to thee.

What our Lord was led to say on the subject of *offences*, from having spoken of offending one of his weak and child-like disciples, is similar to what he observed in his Sermon on the Mount. The meaning of it is, that let any thing we have be ever so dear to us, it is better to part with it, than that it should be the occasion of sin in us, because the gain or advantage we can receive from it is only temporary, whereas the loss and disadvantage is eternal.

10. *Their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven*, that is, God takes especial care of them, the Jews probably imagining that particular persons had their guardian angels.† *Seeing the face of God*, represents, according to the custom of the East, a state of peculiar honour and favour, such as the principal officers of a court have with a sovereign prince.

Here Jesus reverts to the subject of the meek and humble appearance of his disciples.

11. This subject is not the same with that with which it is connected, but similar to it. Jesus having represented his disciples as weak and helpless, exposed to injuries, now considers them as persons who had been given up for *lost*, and as of no account whatever, till they were recovered to virtue and happiness by his doctrine.

12—14. The meaning of this beautiful parable cannot be that the Supreme Being has more satisfaction, as we may say, in the recovery of one person from vice and wickedness, than in the persevering of many in a state of virtue. The conclusion does not express so much as this, but only that it is

\* See *Pearce*, I. pp. 123, 124; *Wakefield*, pp. 256, 257.

† "Our Saviour seems to have adopted in this verse the Jewish notion. *Luke* [ix. 46—48] takes no notice of this assertion." *Ibid.* p. 258.



not his will that any should perish. It is true, however, that when any part of our property is lost, we naturally give more attention to it, than to that which we apprehend to be safe, and therefore the recovery of it gives us more sensible pleasure than our enjoyment of what has never been lost. And as we cannot conceive of God, but as of a being who feels as we do, such human sentiments are here transferred to God, though strictly speaking, they can have no place in him, because he, knowing all things, and seeing the end from the beginning, cannot consider any thing as *lost* that is ever recovered.

15. Jesus having discoursed concerning *offences* and of persons being lost to virtue and recovered again, now speaks of such offences as men are apt to give one another, and of proper conduct on such occasions, in which he recommended the greatest prudence and forbearance, joined to the most unfeigned love to our brother, and the most persevering attempts to recover him to a sense of his duty.\*

17. *If he neglect to hear them, &c.* The sense that I have given to these words in the paraphrase, respecting the power that would devolve upon the officers of the Christian church after the ascension of Christ, cannot, I think, be extended beyond the apostles, except in a sense that reduces the meaning to almost nothing, much below what we cannot but suppose the emphatical words in which it is expressed were intended to convey.

In this chapter we have something like a continued and connected discourse of Jesus, addressed to the twelve, since the whole may be said to relate to *the doctrine of offences*. But as the different articles under this general subject relate to offences in different senses of the word, and the contiguous parts of the discourse have little relation to each other, I think it probable, that upon this occasion, as well as with respect to the Sermon on the Mount, and that which relates to the mission of the twelve, the evangelist has brought together whatever Jesus had said upon this subject at different times, though there is nothing improbable in supposing that he might have delivered the whole at once. The evangelists were not solicitous about the exact order of their narratives, and as they wrote a long time after the transactions, it is probable that they did not exactly remember in what order and place their Master had delivered particular instructions and parables, though they could not

\* "Our Saviour has respect to a precept, Lev. xix. 17." Wakefield, p. 250.

forget the instructions and parables themselves. What we are now entering upon relates to the doctrine of *forgiveness of injuries*, which has a connexion with that concerning *offences* treated of before.

21.\* The mention of *Peter* coming to Jesus in this place looks as if this had not been a connected discourse, and as if Peter might have been absent when the preceding part of it was delivered. But as it was the custom of Jesus, as well as of the Jews in general, to sit when he taught, probably on a raised seat, and his hearers, where it was convenient, might sit also, after the oriental manner, on the ground, Peter might rise and approach to Jesus, in order to ask this question.

There is something particular in Peter's pitching upon the number *seven*, but it is thought to have arisen from the decisions of the Jewish Rabbies, some of which were founded on nothing but the literal interpretation of passages of Scripture. Thus because it is said in the prophet *Amos* (i. 3) "for three transgressions of Damascus, and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof," some of them said that *three* offences would be forgiven, but not a *fourth*; and so others probably putting the *three* and *four* together, might be of opinion that God would forgive *seven times*, and therefore that men ought to do so too: for it seems to have been taken for granted, that the Divine proceedings in this case was a proper pattern for ours.

22.† This reply of Jesus shews that it is absurd to have respect to any particular numbers, but only to the nature of the case, and that true repentance was always entitled to forgiveness, though the offence should have been repeated ever so often. But then it must be acknowledged that the frequent repetition of an offence is no argument of a sincere repentance. To illustrate the doctrine of forgiveness, to shew the great extent, and withal the natural and necessary limitations of it, Jesus proceeds to relate the following very instructive parable.

23—35. We learn from this parable, in the first place, that forgiveness, on the part of God, is properly and absolutely free. The servant acknowledges his debt, and promises payment, but his master seeing his good intentions and inability, had compassion upon him, and forgave him

\* "If my brother injures me, how many injuries *must* I forgive him?" N. T. 1729, l. p. 69. "How oft *may* my brother sin against me, and I *must* forgive him?" *Pilkington*, p. 107.

† See *Gen.* iv. 24 in LXX., "which are exactly the same expressions as those of the Evangelist." *Wakefield*, p. 260.



the debt. Thus you see there was no interference on the part of any person, none to be surety for the debtor to make the payment for him. How absurd then, and how unworthy of the Divine Being, is the popular doctrine of *atonement*, which supposes that God pardons no sin till a complete satisfaction is made to his justice by Christ, who takes upon himself the punishment of every such sin! Sure this could not properly be called *forgiveness*. Is a debt ever said to be forgiven when another pays it for the debtor?

Besides, this parable goes upon the idea that we ought to imitate the conduct of the Divine Being, in forgiving others, as he forgives us. For with this admonition the parable closes, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts\* forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." But if we were to imitate the Divine conduct, as represented in the doctrine of *atonement*, we ought never to forgive till our justice, or vengeance, be satisfied; if not by the offender himself, by some other for him. But what would the common sense of mankind say to such conduct as this? Would they not declare it to be cruel and inhuman, and that such men were utter strangers to forgiveness or mercy? Far, therefore, be this conduct from the ever-blessed God. According to the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures, and all the parables of our Saviour, which describe his character, as that of the father and the prodigal son, as well as that of this creditor, God forgives *freely* in the proper sense of the word, requiring no satisfaction besides repentance and amendment.

It is remarkable that this doctrine of *atonement* was not, like that of the *Trinity*, started in an early period, and completed in the space of about four hundred years: for it was unknown in its full extent till after the Reformation, when it was advanced in opposition to the Popish doctrine of *merit*, which was made the foundation of corrupt *indulgences*.

The second thing that we learn from this parable is, that the pardon of sin is always conditional. Though this debtor is said to have been forgiven, and his debt to have been discharged, yet, on the discovery of his inhumanity, and unrelenting temper towards his fellow-servant, he is charged with it again. In like manner God's final treatment of us

\* "That is, upon the same terms; upon their turning to you, and repenting, and beseeching you to have patience and compassion on them." *Pearce*, l. p. 127. See a favourable "specimen of *Heathen morality*" in *Demost. cont. Mid.* 17, quoted and translated by *Wakefield*, p. 262.

will depend upon the temper and disposition that we shew, not at any particular time, but to the close of our lives; and no particular sin is ever fully pardoned till the general tenor of a man's conduct shall shew that he is deserving of the Divine favour.

*Mark ix. 38. \* Casting out demons in thy name.* Those might be such persons as acted the same part with the sons of *Scæva*, mentioned *Acts xix. 14*, and God might permit their adjurations in the name of Jesus to take effect for the present, but not when they were used in direct opposition to the apostles. But it is possible that these Jews were only attempting, but without success, to cast out *demons* in the name of Jesus.

39, † 40. ‡ It seems to be taken for granted, in this place, that *demons* were cast out by those who were not the professed disciples of Christ, on merely using his name; and yet, as the apostles themselves could not always do this, we can hardly suppose it to have been the case. It is more probable that these people, who, like their countrymen, and other persons of that age, had great faith in *charms*, or the power of certain words, pronounced in a certain manner, imagined that by using the name of *Jesus* in their invocations, they could terrify and expel those demons; and the remark of Jesus is equally just, whether the cure was actually performed or not: for persons attempting only to perform cures in the name of Jesus, must acknowledge some respect for him, and therefore would not *lightly speak evil of him*; so that, whatever they meant, they really did him honour.

41. There seems to be little real connexion between this observation and the preceding one, though it is joined to it by the particle *for*, as if it was the reason of what was advanced before. § Probably the evangelist, recollecting this saying of Jesus, after having written his gospel, and not knowing where to introduce it better, placed it here. The evangelists were not writers by profession, and therefore may well be supposed to have found themselves in situations like this, without knowing how to do better; and as nothing

\* On the omission of one of the clauses, *he followeth not us*, see Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 38; N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 325; *Impr. Vers.* p. 102.

† *Lightly*, "rather readily, easily or soon; as in Greek, *Rom. v. 7.*" *Pearce*, I. p. 252. See Wakefield, I. p. 155; *Impr. Vers.* p. 102.

‡ "I enclose these verses (38—40) in a parenthesis. They strangely interrupt the order of our Lord's discourse." Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 38; N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 326.

§ "John had interrupted Jesus's discourse at ver. 38, and Jesus returns here to what he had been speaking of there." *Pearce*, I. p. 252.



material depended upon mere exactness of arrangement, they would not be solicitous about it.

*Niebuhr* says, that "among the public buildings at *Kahira*, those houses ought to be reckoned, where they daily give water *gratis* to all passengers that desire it."\*

43—46. *The worm dieth not*, &c. This alludes to the consumption of dead bodies by *worms*, when they are buried, as well as sometimes by *fire*. A fire that shall not be quenched, means a fire that shall entirely consume what is committed to it.† So future punishments will not be remitted till they have completely answered the end for which they are inflicted, whether that be the destruction‡ or purification of the sinner.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* xvii. (10.) Do not think meanly of the least of my disciples, for they are ministered unto by angels, and even those angels which are in the greatest favour with God, and stand in his presence, ready to execute his most important commissions.

(17.) Whenever any fellow-christian, or nominal member of my church, shall be found to be irreclaimable, he must be solemnly cut off from your communion, and be considered by you as one of the world at large, with whom you have no particular connexion. (18.) When I am removed from you, the powers that I now have will devolve upon you by the descent of the Holy Spirit; and whatever you do by the direction of that Spirit shall be ratified in heaven. (19.) And as the Father hears me always, so also when you, under the influence of the same Spirit, shall join in prayer for any thing that is subservient to the advancement of true religion, your petition shall certainly be heard. (20.) For whenever so few of you are assembled as Christians, for any purpose that respects my religion, it is the same thing as if I myself was there; so that your prayers, and your acts, will have the same force as my own.

\* *Voy.* (I. p. 97). *Harmer*, III. p. 165. See *ibid.* pp. 161—163.

† See *supra*, p. 31.

‡ I regret to observe that Mr. Dodson could find no refuge from the horrible doctrine of endless torments, but in this gloomy view of the Divine dispensations. In opposition to Bishop Lowth's opinion, "that in the figurative *Gehenna*, (that is, the invisible place of torment,) the instruments of punishment shall be everlasting, and the suffering without end," Mr. D. represents as "the doctrine of the Bible, that the punishment of the incorrigibly wicked will be eternal, as they will be finally destroyed and annihilated; and not that they will live for ever in a state of misery and torment." See *Dodson's Notes* (on *Isaiah* lxvi. 24), pp. 382, 383.

## SECTION XLVII.

*Jesus takes his final leave of Galilee, in order to go to Judea. James and John would call for Fire from Heaven upon some Samaritans.*

*Matt.* xix. 1 ; *Luke* xiii. 31—35 ; ix. 51—56 ; *John* vii. 2—10.

JESUS having now discharged the purpose of his mission in *Galilee*, is about to leave it, in order to spend the remainder of his time in *Judea*, the southern part of the country ; though he had not failed to visit Jerusalem both at the Passover, and the Feast of Pentecost preceding. And his miracles had been seen by so many persons, and were so much talked of, that it cannot be supposed that any inhabitant of Judea had been without sufficient opportunity of informing himself concerning them ; and therefore his visiting many places in Judea towards the close of his ministry, was not so necessary as his going about to different places in Galilee. If he *had* done it, there was no occasion for the evangelist to dwell upon the particulars, after giving an account of his progresses through Galilee, as both the discourses and the events would no doubt be similar.

*John* vii. 2. This was the greatest and most joyful festival of the Jews, being celebrated after harvest, which in all countries is the natural season for festivity ; the fruits of the year being then safely gathered in, and there being no prospect of want in the approaching winter.\* But with the Jews it was more particularly in commemoration of their ancestors having lived in tents in the Wilderness forty years after they left Egypt. It was therefore a memorial of their having been fed with manna from heaven, and of all the miraculous events of that wonderful period.

It is something remarkable with respect to this particular festival, that, after the final return of the Israelites to their own country, where they are to be the most distinguished people upon earth, and Jerusalem is to be the great seat of worship and the resort of nations, deputies from all parts of the world are to join in the celebration of it, by which means a regular intercourse of a most friendly kind will be kept up among all the people of the world.†

\* See *Jos. Antiq.* B. iii. Ch. x. Sect. iv. ; *Pearce*, I. p. 508.

† See *Zach.* xiv. 16—19. (P.) Vol. XII. p. 405.



5. These *brethren* of Jesus might either be his proper *brothers* by Joseph and Mary, or some near relations, such as we should call cousins, for to these the appellation *brothers* is often given in the *Hebrew* idiom, as the term *father* was given to any elderly relation.

5. These *brethren* of Jesus, it is evident, did not deny the truth of his miracles, but they did not admit him to be the *Messiah*.<sup>\*</sup> Indeed it must have been peculiarly difficult for them to admit this, with respect to a person with whom they had been brought up from their infancy, who had worked with them at the same laborious occupation, and who, till the age of thirty, had not been considered as superior to themselves. There does not, however, appear to have been any thing hostile or unfriendly to Jesus in their behaviour towards him, either on this or any former occasion: for we have seen that at one time, when he was much fatigued with travelling and preaching, they shewed great anxiety for him, as kind relations naturally would, and we find that they were afterwards among the number of the disciples of Jesus, and they probably became so some time before his death. For when the first disciples were assembled after the ascension of Jesus, and before the day of Pentecost, it is said, (*Acts* i. 14,) "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." The same phrase is used in both places, and is therefore probably to be understood of the same persons. The incredulity, therefore, or rather the hesitation, of the brethren of Jesus to admit his being the *Messiah*, only shews that they were not disposed to admit it without very strong evidence; and it is a circumstance greatly in favour of the evidence. (It required the greatest address in *Mahomet* to persuade his own family to believe his divine mission, and was not accomplished in several years, though they were to be the greatest gainers by his advancement.) It must be observed, likewise, that one of Jesus's brethren, viz. *James*, was among the twelve apostles from the beginning: for he is always called *the Lord's brother*. It was this *James* who resided at Jerusalem, and who had the most influence among the Christians there.

7. By Jesus saying to his brethren *the world cannot hate you*,<sup>†</sup> we are not to suppose that they were men who so conformed to the world as to be addicted to the vices of it, and

<sup>\*</sup> See *Lardner*, VI. p. 497; *Pearce*, I. p. 508.

<sup>†</sup> On this phraseology, as designing *will not*, see *Le Cene*, pp. 506—509; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 135, 136.

by that means to have the favour of the world, but only that they had not rendered themselves peculiarly obnoxious to the resentment of the Jewish rulers, as he had done, by his free censure of them.

10. At this *feast* Jesus thought proper to spend no more time at Jerusalem than was necessary, and therefore did not choose to go up along with his brethren, as otherwise he naturally would have done, but went afterwards, and with few attendants.

*Luke* xiii. 31. It is not probable that *Herod* had any serious design of apprehending Jesus, and much less of putting him to death. It is evident that he had suffered by the remorse of his conscience for the murder of *John the Baptist*, in which, however, he had not been a willing actor. But he might not be pleased to see Jesus, attended by such crowds of people as generally followed him, in his territories, and therefore might give out that he would apprehend him, as he had done *John the Baptist*, without really intending it, but thinking by such a threat to make him leave that part of the country; and on this account Jesus might call him a *fox*, or a cunning and artful man, which however was not his general character, though he was profligate and dissolute.

*I shall be perfected.* Perhaps he means I shall have finished all that is appointed me here.\*

The word which we render *perfected*, also signifies to be *consecrated* or *made ready* as a victim for the altar.

33. It appears, from this circumstance, that Jesus generally performed his journeys on foot, and the distance of the central parts of Galilee from *Jerusalem* being about sixty miles, it would be a journey of three days for a man, walking at his leisure.†

It was not literally true that no prophet had ever perished *out of Jerusalem*; but the great council of the nation being there, if they were sentenced to death in a judicial form, it must have been in that place.‡

The *ellipsis* seems best supplied from his own words in the preceding verse, thus: *Nevertheless, I must cast out devils, and do cures, to-day and to-morrow, and depart the day following, for it cannot, &c.*§

34. We see here the tender and affectionate temper of

\* *Turner. (P.)* See *Pearce*, I. p. 389.

† For another *reading*, rather than *walk*, see *Pearce*, I. p. 389; *Impr. Vers.* p. 173. "I must be stirring about" (a too colloquial phrase) is the translation, *N. T.* 1729, I. p. 270.

‡ *Le Cene*, pp. 505, 506.

§ *Turner. (P.)* See *Bowyer*, p. 42; *Pilkington*, p. 113.



Jesus, which indeed always shewed itself whenever he reflected on the calamities that were to befall his countrymen, though they were his enemies and murderers.

35. In this, Jesus probably referred to his second and glorious coming, when the Jews and all the world would hail him as the *Messiah* or *king*. After this time he visited *Jerusalem* twice before his death, viz. at the approaching *Feast of Tabernacles*, and at the *Passover* following.

*Matt.* xix. 1; \* *Luke* ix. 51. As neither Matthew nor Luke gives any account of Jesus going to this Feast of Tabernacles, it is probable that what they say here of his *leaving Galilee to go into Judea*, means his leaving that part of the country in general, to go and reside in the more southern provinces, and it is possible that he might return to Galilee after this feast, and withdraw from it *finally* some time afterwards; and then he might not go to Judea immediately, but to the country beyond Jordan. *Luke* saying, that *he set his face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem*, implies that it required great courage and erection of mind to do it, which might be said with truth of his going to suffer there, but not of his going to attend a festival.†

54—56. This is a very instructive part of the history of Jesus, and shews in the clearest light both his own natural meekness, and what should be the temper of all his followers. The zeal of his disciples on this occasion was natural, and they thought the behaviour of these Samaritans and the example of *Elijah* would justify such an astonishing miracle as they proposed.‡ But Jesus had more enlarged views; he pitied the weakness of men, and did not wish to hurt even his enemies. Besides, these were not the personal enemies of Jesus, being only actuated by the spirit of opposition which respected the whole nation of the Jews.

## SECTION XLVIII.

*The Cure of the ten Lepers, the Mission of the Seventy, and their Instructions.*

*Luke* xvii. 11—19; x. 1—12.

WE are still considering what passed between our Saviour's finally taking leave of *Galilee*, and his going to reside in

\* "By the side of Jordan." *Harm.* 1780, p. 126. See *Pearce*, I. p. 128; *Impr. Vers.* p. 45.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 362, Note r.

‡ See *Bayle* on this passage, examined by *M. Roques*, V. p. 430.

*Judea*, either immediately before *the Feast of Tabernacles*, or presently after it. Wherever he went, opportunities occurred of giving useful instructions and performing benevolent actions, and no opportunity of this kind was neglected by him.

*Luke* xvii. 11. Or *between Galilee and Samaria*, on the confines of both.\*

12. The leprosy being an infectious disease, those who were afflicted with it were not permitted to come near other persons, but lived together in separate places.† These persons, therefore, *stood afar off*, as became their condition, and called aloud to Jesus as he was passing. It is something remarkable that these unhappy persons could associate together, though one of them was a *Samaritan*, and the rest, *Jews*; and in general they had the most rooted aversion to each other.

14. When the leprous person, who met Jesus on his descent from the Mount, presented himself to him, it is said (*Matt.* viii. 3) he “put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean.” This might be intended to shew that he was under no apprehension of catching the disorder himself. In this case, he adopts his usual manner of speaking to the diseased persons, without touching them.

According to the Jewish law, *the priests* were the judges of the signs of leprosy, and authorized to pronounce whether it was safe for them to live in society or not.‡ Jesus, in sending these persons to the priest, shewed his attention to the law, and likewise provided a proper evidence of the cure. When these lepers left Jesus, it is evident that they had the disease upon them, but by this time the many cures he had performed, some in one way and some in another, had produced in the people a general conviction of his power, and a disposition to comply with any injunctions that he should lay upon them. This healing at a distance would tend to shew that the cure was not performed by any medical application; and there is this use in that variety of manner, in which Jesus performed his cures, that by this means every possible objection was obviated.

By the order given to this Samaritan, as well as to the Jews, to go and shew himself to *the priest*, meaning no doubt at the Temple of Jerusalem, Jesus might designedly intimate

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 406.

† See *Lev.* xiii. 46; *Numb.* v. 2; *2 Kings* xv. 5.

‡ See *Lev.* xiii. 1—17; xiv. 2—32; Vol. XI. p. 206.



to this Samaritan, that the proper seat of worship was *Jerusalem*, and not Mount *Gerizim*.

18, \* 19. Jesus being free from all the low prejudices of his countrymen, (which by the way is a circumstance that unbelievers cannot easily account for, since his education was no doubt the same with that of other Jews,) takes every opportunity of lessening the force of them in others. Thus, in a very early part of his ministry, to the great surprise of his disciples, he conversed familiarly with a woman of that country at a well, and spent two days in the town where she lived. He chose, in one of his parables, to represent the perfection of humanity in the character of a *Samaritan*, and inhumanity in that of a *Jewish* priest and Levite. At this time he makes no distinction in his miracles, but shewed his good-will to both nations alike. He likewise particularly pointed out the difference between this Samaritan and the nine Jews, to the advantage of the former, who discovered a strong sense of the favour he had received, which the others did not; and he commended the Samaritan for his *faith*, as he had done a Roman centurion in a similar case, as having shewn a better disposition than the Jews.

*Luke* x. 1. During our Lord's residence in Galilee, he had sent out the twelve apostles, to visit those places where he himself could not conveniently go. The number *twelve* had probably some reference to the *twelve tribes* of Israel. In travelling through Judea he now selects *seventy* persons,† perhaps in allusion to the *seventy elders*, of which the supreme court of judicature among the Jews consisted. They seem to have been sent out with the same view, and to have had the same power with the twelve.

2. As several things mentioned in this charge which Jesus gave to the Seventy, relate to things which could not happen in Judea, or indeed any where before his own death, it is not improbable that, though little be said of these seventy disciples, they were those who were afterwards called *Evang-  
elists*, whose business it was to preach the gospel, and that their instructions respected their future mission more than this. *Luke*, *Mark* and *Barnabas* are all said, by several of the ancients, to have been of these *seventy*; and having at-

\* "Is nobody returned to glorify God, but this alien only?" N. T. 1729, I. p. 283.  
"Read, with the *Syriac*, interrogatively, *Have none been found who returned—except this stranger?*" See *Bowyer*, p. 43.

† "This appointment is omitted by the three other evangelists." *Pearce*, I. p. 364.

tended upon Jesus almost as much as the twelve, they were nearly as well qualified both for this work, and for writing the history of his life, as the apostles themselves.

4. This could hardly mean that they were not to give or receive the common salutation, which would not detain them in travelling, but that they were not to stop and converse with those that they met. *Niebuhr* says it is customary in Arabia, after the common salutation, to stop travellers, and ask them many impertinent questions, the answering of which would have detained them a considerable time.\*

12. As there is nothing materially different in the instructions given to the *seventy*, and those to the *twelve*, I shall in this place give a summary view of the purport of them, under distinct heads.

1. This commission was the very same with that of *John the Baptist*, and Jesus himself, not to declare that he was the *Messiah*, but only that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, and to work miracles as he himself did, even raising the dead.

2. They were to communicate to others whatever they had learned of him, without making any reserve.

3. They were to depend entirely on the providence of God for their support, and not to seek various entertainments by going from house to house.

4. In full confidence of their divine mission, they were to pronounce the blessing of peace on those who received them, and to leave a solemn testimony against those who rejected them.

5. They were to behave with the greatest innocence and integrity, but at the same time with prudence.

6. They were not to fear man, but confide in the special providence of God, whenever they should be brought into any circumstance of peculiar danger.

7. They were not to be discouraged, either at their own persecution, since he himself was to suffer as much as they could do, or at those dissensions which the promulgation of Christianity would necessarily occasion in the world.

8. When they were persecuted in any one place, they were directed to flee to another, so that they were not ostentatiously to brave danger.

9. They were assured that whatever any of them might lose by their adherence to him, abundant recompence would be made to them for it. If they should lose their lives in

\* See *Harmer*, III. pp. 269—275; *Pearce*, I. p. 364.



his cause, they would receive a nobler life hereafter, such as it was not in the power of man to take from them.

10. Lastly, all those who should befriend them would be considered as having shewn friendship to their Master, and be rewarded by him for it hereafter.

## SECTION XLIX.

*Jesus discourses with the Jews concerning his Mission, at the Feast of Tabernacles.*

*John vii. 11—53.*

JESUS is now at Jerusalem, at *the Feast of Tabernacles*, and here *John* has recorded several of his very interesting discourses with the Jews, such as were omitted by the other evangelists. They chiefly relate to the evidence of his mission; as if *John*, writing the last of the evangelists, and near to, if not after the destruction of Jerusalem, wished to shew that the Jews had resisted not only the evidence of miracles seen by themselves, in favour of the divine mission of Jesus, but also his own just reasonings on the subject, so that they were wholly without excuse. They indulged a disposition of mind, on which no evidence could make any impression, and being incurably blinded by their vices and obstinacy, were ripe for destruction.

There is great obscurity in all the discourses of Jesus related by *John*, being probably very imperfectly recollected, and likewise recited without those circumstances which attended the delivery, and which would have contributed to make them intelligible.

11—13. We cannot wonder that by this time Jesus and his miracles were become interesting objects of attention, and subjects of discourse to all the Jewish nation. All persons must have heard of him, and have formed some opinion or other about him. The common people in general thought highly of him, not doubting his divine mission, any more than they had done that of *John the Baptist*, and they hoped that he might be their promised *Messiah*. But the heads of the nation, on account of his paying no court to them, and always appearing hostile to them, (so that whatever he was, they were sensible they had nothing to hope from him,) were not his friends. They were very unwilling to think that he was a prophet, and were very far from sup-

posing him to be the Messiah. They were perpetually cavilling at his miracles, and his conduct, saying that he could not come from God, because he broke the laws of Moses, in performing his cures on the Sabbath-day; and as to the most distinguished of his miracles, viz. curing *demoniacs*, and probably the rest of his miracles also, they ascribed them to the assistance of *Satan*. However, knowing that the bulk of the people thought well of him, they did not choose to speak openly what they thought of him, any more than they did with respect to *John the Baptist*.

15. Among the Jews, no person undertook to teach others, who had not had a regular education under their *Scribes*, or professed teachers of the law; whereas Jesus employed himself wholly in teaching, and in the most public place of resort, the Temple, where the Jewish doctors also taught, without having any advantage of that kind.

16. This reply was modest and proper, and at the same time led to the subject of his divine mission, with which he wished to impress them. Though he had not had his instruction from the Scribes, he was not therefore *untaught*, but had been *taught of God* himself, and was therefore well qualified to teach others. This, however, I would observe, is not the language of one who was conscious that he himself was God, and therefore could not stand in any need of teaching.\*

17. Here Jesus very properly hints at the true reason of the unbelief of the Scribes and Pharisees in his mission. They had not an ingenuous, candid mind, open to conviction, or a real desire to know and do the will of God. And we see every day that the same evidence makes a very different impression upon persons, according to their previous disposition with respect to the object of it.

18. Here Jesus gives another proof of his not being an impostor. He claimed nothing to himself, and did not seek to advance his own glory or worldly interest; for impostors always seek something for themselves. Jesus had indeed, in one sense, his own glory in view, as was evident from his praying for it, and from its being said [*Heb. xii. 2*] that “for

\* A learned *Trinitarian*, who is generally better employed, thus endeavours to qualify our Lord's assertion: “That is, is not so much mine as his; or, is not mine only, but his also.” *Pearce*, I. p. 509. See *ibid.* (on *Ch. xii. 44*), p. 552. *Doddridge* (Sect. xcix.) on this occasion forgets his system, or relies on the accommodating theory of two natures. He thus paraphrases: “For my doctrine, or that which I now teach you, is not mine own invention, or what I have learnt by any common method of inquiry; but it is entirely his that sent me, and I learned it by immediate inspiration from him.”



the joy that was set before him, *he* endured the cross ;” but then it was *in a future state*, not *in this*, to which alone impostors look.

19. This, which he knew to be their secret intention, could not be agreeable to the law of Moses.

20. This must have been said by some of the common people, who suspected nothing of the secret designs of their rulers. They even thought it folly in the extreme to imagine such a thing.

22. *Δια τουτο* should have been joined to *θαυμαζετε* in the close of the preceding verse—*Ye all marvel at it.\**

23. † *That the law of Moses should not be broken.* Or the sense may be, as in the margin of our translation, *without breaking the law of Moses. ‡*

Jesus here shews them that the law of Moses, for which they professed so great an attachment, allowed more manual labour than he had ever employed on that day : for if the eighth day from the birth of a child should be a Sabbath, it must be circumcised on that day ; § whereas he had not worked at all, but had only pronounced a man to be cured on that day ; and being aided by the power of God in the performance of this cure, it certainly carried its own justification along with it.

25—27. This must have been said by some who had been informed of the intention of the rulers ; though perhaps what Jesus himself had said before, being divulged, might be all the information that these people had. They expressed their surprise that the rulers, having formed the design of putting Jesus to death, should not apprehend him, but suffer him to speak openly as he did, and might think that they themselves might begin to suspect that he was the Messiah. This, however, they thought could not well be ; because it was generally imagined, that though the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, he would not be known to be the Messiah till *Elijah* should come and anoint him. Till that time they might suppose that he would be concealed, nobody could tell where, and thence come and make his appearance as a king, *in the clouds of heaven*, as described by *Daniel* [vii. 13].

28, 29. This should have been read by way of interroga-

\* *Turner.* (P.) See *Doddridge* (Sect. xcix., Note f) ; *Pilkington*, pp. 184, 185 ; *Bowyer*, p. 52.

† “ *Ὅλον ὄγη, for every whit sound, seems hard. Perhaps ΧΩΛΟΝ. ‘Are ye angry that I have made a maimed man sound?’*” *Wetstein*, in *Bowyer*, p. 52.

‡ “ *Quoique la loi de Moyse ne soit point violée, ce qui prouve beaucoup mieux le dessein du Sauveur en ce lieu.*” *Le Cene*, p. 578.

§ See *Wotton*, I. p. 285 ; II. pp. 124—129.

tion,—Do you indeed know me, and whence I am? Then you must know that I am come from God;\* but with him, and the measures of his conduct, you are not acquainted, as I am.

31. It appears from this that the Jews expected that the *Messiah* would work miracles; and at this day the common opinion among them is, that he is to act the part of Moses, and to deliver them from their present dispersion, and, as it were, bondage, in all nations in the world, as Moses did from their bondage in Egypt; and as miracles were necessary to effect the one, so they will probably be necessary to effect the other.

Jesus had now been preaching publicly, and working miracles, from the *Passover* to the *Feast of Tabernacles*, which he is now attending, the former in our *March*, the latter in *September*; in all which time he could conveniently appear abroad, and be attended by others with the most convenience: for we generally find him teaching in the open air. By this time the rulers of the Jews had formed their opinions, and taken their measures, with respect to him. They had been informed of all that he had taught, and they had seen and heard all that he did; and finding that whether he was a true prophet or not, he was not a man to their purpose, (an idea which of itself would strongly prejudice them against his pretensions to a divine mission, and lead them to account for his conduct and miracles in any other manner, rather than on that principle,) they had determined to put him to death. They had indeed formed the design so early as the *Pentecost*, but they were undetermined how to put it in execution; and they were the more irresolute on account of Jesus being so well received by the common people, so that their design was only suspected by some. We have now the first account of any open attempt to apprehend him.

32. *The Pharisees*, finding that the people in general entertained the idea of Jesus being their promised *Messiah*, especially on account of the miracles which he wrought, and probably seeing that their design was now suspected, thought that their authority would be lost, if they did not proceed to carry it into execution; and therefore now, for the first time, they send proper officers to apprehend Jesus, and to bring him before them. It appears, however, that these officers did not attempt to execute their orders immediately, and yet finding a great concourse of people about

\* See *Bowyer*, p. 52.



Jesus, listening attentively to him, in so public a place as the Temple, they joined the audience ; intending no doubt to take that opportunity of apprehending him, when they should see that they could do it to the most advantage.

33. In the mean time, Jesus proceeds with his discourse, which was not one continued speech, but rather a conversation arising from particular incidents ; and knowing who were present, he had, no doubt, a view to them in what he took occasion to say from this time.

34. *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, &c.* Alluding to the period after his resurrection, meaning that they would be inquiring after, and wishing for, the Messiah.

In this Jesus alludes, no doubt, to those who were sent to apprehend him ; and what he said could not well have been understood by any others. It might be their perceiving this, and knowing that he had no natural means of being acquainted with it, that might contribute to overawe them, and prevent them from executing the purpose on which they had been sent.

35. *And teach them.* *Pearce*\* considers the word *Greeks* as an interpolation, thinking that the Jews would hardly suspect our Lord of teaching any other people than the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, not the *Gentiles* themselves.

Jesus here says that his stay with them would not be long ; that when his time should be expired, but not before, he should return to him that sent him, meaning God, and that then it would not be in their power to apprehend him at all. He hereby intimated that he was not then to be apprehended by any person, but was to continue preaching some time longer.

36. As none but those who were sent to apprehend Jesus, could well know what he meant, the rest of the audience must have been at a loss to know what he alluded to ; and they thought that he could no otherwise go whither they could not come to him, but by going among the Gentiles and preaching to them : for that if he went among the Jews, wherever they were dispersed, they would know where he was, and could have access to them. The Jews of that age took infinite pains to make proselytes, and therefore they imagined that Jesus would go on a mission for that purpose. It appears, however, that he did not choose to explain himself any farther, having said what he thought sufficient with respect to those who were sent to apprehend him.

\* *Com. I. p. 512.*

37, 38. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was a day of great joy and festivity among the Jews, it was the custom to fetch water from the brook of *Siloam*, some of which they drank with loud acclamations of joy and thanksgiving, and some they brought to the altar, in commemoration of their forefathers being miraculously relieved when they thirsted in the Wilderness; and some they brought as a drink-offering to God, to pray for rain against the following seed-time.\*

Some obscurity seems to arise from an injudicious punctuation and division of these verses. I would read the text thus—*If any man thirst, let him come unto me; and let him that believeth on me drink, as the Scripture hath said; (referring to Isaiah lv. 1;) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* These last words are not a quotation, for we do not find them any where in the Old Testament,† but our Lord's own promise, as the evangelist intimates in the following words. Perhaps *καὶ* may have been lost from before *ποταμοί*.‡

39. § This is the interpretation which the evangelist puts upon the words of Jesus: but it is possible that, on this occasion, Jesus might intend to intimate the same that he did when, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria, [*John* iv. 14,] he said that *the water which he should give would be a well of water, springing up unto eternal life;* meaning that it would make them immortal, giving them a place in heaven, where they will be happy for ever. The same also was his meaning when in his discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, [*John* vi. 51,] he said, that *if any man eat of the bread that he should give him, he would live for ever.* According to the evangelist, Jesus referred to the benefit that would arise to *others*, from the preaching of his disciples, and not to themselves.

40. There does not appear to be any sufficient ground for this conclusion from any thing that Jesus then said: for though what he delivered may be called *a prophecy*, it was not then fulfilled. They must therefore have been struck with his authoritative manner of speaking, or with the general strain of his doctrine, and the tenor of his conduct,

\* *Benson's Life of Christ*, p. 412. (P.) See *Harmer*, III. pp. 7—10; *Wotton*, I. p. 127; *L'Enfant* in *Harwood's Introd.* II. (Sect. xxi.), p. 305.

† See *Mede* (Diss. xvii.), p. 62.

‡ *Turner*. (P.) See *Le Cene*, pp. 578—582; *Bowyer*, p. 52.

§ See *Lardner*, XI. pp. 266, 267; *Pearce*, I. pp. 513, 514.



and have drawn this conclusion of his being a prophet from the whole. By *the prophet* they might mean *Elias*, who was to precede the *Messiah*.

43. This *division among the people* seems only to refer to some of them thinking that he was simply a prophet, (or perhaps that prophet who was to announce the *Messiah*,) and others that he was the *Messiah* himself. If there was any other difference of opinion among the common people, it is not here mentioned.

44. That is, some of those who were sent by the Pharisees for that purpose; but they being probably many of them, (for the rulers could not think to effect their purpose by a few persons, when Jesus was attended by such crowds of his friends in so public a place as the Temple,) the majority would not join with them in it.

46. We may easily judge what must have been the disappointment of the chief rulers of the nation, assembled in council, to find that they were not able to get their orders obeyed. All authority, we see, depends on the concurrence of others, or the disposition and will of many to second the wishes of a few. In other words, all power depends upon *opinion*, and without the general opinion in their favour, magistrates are no more than single men. As these officers do not explain themselves, we may suppose that they were overawed by what Jesus had said, which implied that he well knew their errand, and that they could not succeed in it; as they had been struck by the manner in which he had delivered himself, so much in the character of a prophet.

49. This shews the extreme chagrin and pride of the members of this court. They had no resource but in their officers; and though they had not obeyed them, they seem to have had no means of punishing them for their disobedience. The learned Pharisees held the common people, who had not studied *the law*, as they had done, in great contempt, and thought it presumption in them to have an opinion which was not authorized by their established teachers.

50; 51. *Nicodemus*, being one of the court, had a right to give his opinion, which in this case was sensible and proper. They ought not to have decided on the pretensions of Jesus, and much less have determined to put him to death, without having heard or examined him.

52. Since several *prophets* had actually risen out of Galilee, (as particularly, it is thought, *Elijah*, *Elisha*, *Jonah*, *Amos*,

Nahum and Hosea,) *Pearce*\* thinks that the great prophet whom they expected to precede the Messiah was meant.

In this case they observe that there was no occasion to hear and examine Jesus, since the place from which he sprung was sufficient to disprove his pretensions; so weakly do great bodies of men sometimes argue when their interest lays a bias on their minds. Let us all be on our guard against this, and every other source of false judgment.

53. They appear to have been entirely at a loss what to do, and being disappointed in this attempt, they did not at this time come to any resolution about another.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* vii. (15.) The Jews marvelled, saying, how came this man to be so learned in the law of God, when he has not been educated under any of the doctors who profess that knowledge? (16.) Jesus answered, my doctrine is neither any thing that I have learned of your doctors, nor what I have acquired of myself, but what I have received from God; (17,) as any person who does the will of God, and has a mind free from vicious prejudice, may easily perceive. (18.) That I am no impostor, you might presume from my not acting in my own name, but referring every thing to God who sent me, without having any secular views whatever. (19.) But, as I observed, they are only those who, without prejudice, seek to know and labour to do the will of God, that can expect to judge rightly concerning me; and this is not your case: for though Moses gave you the law, which you acknowledge came from God, many of you live in wilful violation of it; and, even at this very time, I know that, in direct violation of that law, some of you have formed a design of putting me to death. (20.) The populace, who knew nothing of that design, said unto him, Thou must certainly be possessed with a demon, to entertain such a suspicion. Dost thou not go where thou pleasest, and preach what thou pleasest, unmolested? Who goes about to kill thee?

(21, 22.) Jesus, without thinking proper to make any reply to those persons, who were not in the secret of their rulers; but, knowing that the true motive of those who had their design against him was his having healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, addressed them on that subject, saying, The thing at which you are so much offended, ought not to surprise you, because it is of a piece with what you

\* *Com.* 1. p. 515.



do yourselves, who make no scruple of performing the action of circumcision on the Sabbath-day. (23.) And there is this difference between the two actions in favour of mine, that whereas you wound, I heal, and not one member of the human body only, but the whole man. (24.) For the future, therefore, judge more equitably and impartially concerning my conduct.

(25.) Some of the people of Jerusalem, who knew of the design of their rulers, said, Is not this the man whom they are seeking to kill? (26.) And yet he preacheth openly without molestation. Can it be that they have laid aside their intention, and are now convinced that he is indeed the Messiah? (27.) It is, however, impossible that it should be the Messiah, because he is of Nazareth, in Galilee, which we are sure is not the birth-place of the Messiah. We are, moreover, apprized that there will be something very extraordinary, or miraculous, attending his birth, whereas this Jesus is nothing more than the son of Joseph and Mary. (28.) Jesus, knowing that the persons who reasoned in this manner were within the reach of his voice, cried out, Do you indeed know me, and whence I am? If you do, you well know that I have a commission from God, who would not impose upon you by such credentials of a divine mission as he has sent with me. But you are indeed very far from having that knowledge of God, and of his designs, that you imagine you have, and which I really have, having sprung immediately from him, and having been expressly sent by him. (30.) Then the people, who were commissioned by the magistrates to seize him, sought for an opportunity of executing their commission; but their wicked design was over-ruled for the present by the providence of God, it being more suitable to the designs of his infinite wisdom, that Jesus should be put to death in a more public manner, at the ensuing Passover.

## SECTION L.

*Of the Woman taken in Adultery. Jesus discourses concerning his being the Light of the World.*

*John viii. 1—30.*

**JOHN** viii. 1, 2. During our Lord's attendance on the public festivals at Jerusalem, it seems to have been his custom not to sleep in the city, but in some place in the

neighbourhood of it. It was evidently so at the last Passover, when it is said that he slept at Bethany; and it is very probable that he did so at this time, as this was a village at the foot of, or on *the Mount of Olives*, which was only separated from the city by a narrow valley; and in this village lived Lazarus and his two sisters, for whom Jesus had a particular friendship. The Temple being the place of the greatest resort, Jesus no sooner returned from the place where he had passed the night, than we find him there.

5. It has been observed that, according to the law of Moses, the punishment of *stoning* is only enjoined in the case of a woman *betrothed to a man*, and not actually married. If she was married, it is said indeed that she should be *put to death*; but as nothing is said of the manner of doing it, the Jews interpreted it of *strangling*.\*

6. It is evident from this, that the Jewish rulers having failed in their former attempt to put Jesus to death, by apprehending him, and themselves passing sentence of death upon him, now thought to gain their point by accusing him to the Roman governor, as one who had not only assumed the character of a king, but who had actually interfered in the administration of justice. For they seem to have taken it for granted that he would confirm their decision, that the woman ought to be stoned; and they were, no doubt, ready to produce evidence, that he had given orders for the execution as a judge, and not merely as a man giving his opinion what a proper judge ought to do in the case. He therefore very wisely avoided giving them any handle against him; and in the first place did not appear to take any notice of them.

*Wrote on the ground.* The words, *As though he heard them not*, which follow in our translation, are not in our present Greek text, and are superfluous.†

7. This is one of the many occasions on which Jesus extricated himself from the snares of his enemies by his happy presence of mind. He did not say that the woman might not be stoned, nor did he give orders, as from himself, that she should be stoned; but well knowing the characters of those who had brought her, men who were probably guilty of the very crime of which they accused this woman, (for in other places he says, concerning persons of this class, that they robbed *widows' houses*, and for a pretence made long

\* See Lev. xx. 10; Dent. xxii. 23, 24; Pearce, I. p. 516.

† See Doddridge (Sect. cii.) Note (d); Pearce, I. p. 516; Wakefield's Notes, p. 104; N.T. Ed. 2, I. p. 389.



prayers, and that they were *adulterers and a sinful generation*,) he spake to their consciences in such a manner as evidently astonished and overawed them: for without some particular consciousness of the truth of his insinuation, they would hardly have left him and the woman in the manner they did.

9. There is something extraordinary in these persons walking off according to their ages, which must have been particularly noticed by those who were present, and have been remembered for its singularity. Perhaps the oldest, who went off first, was the most guilty. By Jesus being *left alone, with the woman in the midst*, we are to understand that her accusers were all gone, and the woman left standing in the circle, which had no doubt been made for her and her accusers, by the disciples of Jesus and the surrounding multitude, in the midst of whom they now were.\*

11. † This was a sufficient reproof from Jesus, in the character of a teacher, and might have a greater effect than a stronger invective; and yet, on this account, many Christians, in former times, suspected the truth of the story, and omitted it in their copies of this gospel. But this was only in a few of them, so that there cannot be any reasonable doubt of its authenticity.‡ According to the severe rules of church discipline in primitive times, an adulterer, or adulteress, was not till after many years, if at all, received into communion.

12. On the preceding day there had been a dispute among the Jews, who Jesus was, whether he might not be the prophet who was to precede the Messiah, or the Messiah himself. To this, and to the custom, as it is thought, of celebrating this *Feast of Tabernacles* with *lights*, Jesus now alludes, telling them, in figurative terms, *who* and *what* he was, viz. *the light of the world*, a person sent to impart to mankind the most important and salutary truth.§

\* On vers. 1—9, see *Lardner*, I. pp. 41, 42.

† “Neither do I pass sentence of death upon thee.” *Harm.* 1780, p. 182. See *Luke* xii. 14; *Le Clerc*, N. T. p. 292.

‡ “Le dernier verset du chap. précédent et les onze premiers de celui-ci ne se trouvant point dans les plus anciens MSS., non plus que dans la version Syriacque et dans les anciens commentateurs Grecs de cet Evangile, *Th. de Beze* et plusieurs autres savans hommes l’ont tenue pour suspecte.” *Le Clerc*, N. T. p. 291.

“This paragraph concerning the woman taken in adultery was not inserted in the Alexandrian (see *Woide’s Preface*), and is wanting in the Vatican, Ephrem and other manuscripts of great authority, and in the oldest copies of the Syriac version, and is not cited by Origen, Chrysostom, and other ancient ecclesiastical writers. It is found in the Cambridge manuscript, but with some variations; and though not removed out of the text by Griesbach, it is marked by him as very probably spurious.” *Impr. Vers.* p. 234. See *Doddridge*, Sect. cii. Note (a); *Pearce*, I. p. 518, Note (c) *ad fin.*

§ See *Pearce*, I. pp. 518, 519.

14. This Mr. Wakefield renders, *Though I do bear testimony to myself, this testimony is true, that I know whence I came, and whither I am going.*\* This he could not but know of himself.

14—18. There is much obscurity in what Jesus here says of the witnesses to his divine mission. The first observes that his own testimony ought to be received, because it related to another of which he alone had perfect knowledge, viz. the commission that he had received from God, and the issue of it in his resurrection and ascension. This is implied in his saying, *I know whence I came, and whither I go*; it is therefore a kind of appeal to his future resurrection, and to God bearing witness to him by the miracles which he wrought. But still they were not two distinct witnesses which the law of Moses required, viz. two besides the person himself, unless we suppose him to have personified the power of working miracles, as he afterwards did, by the name of *the Holy Spirit*, as something distinct from the Father himself. But this is not treated of here.

19. Jesus could not mean that the Jews had no knowledge of the true God, but they did not know the relation in which he stood to God.

21. They would in vain look for the *Messiah*, in their troubles, which however would come, and terminate in the destruction of their nation, for their unbelief, and their rejection of him; but before that time he would be out of their reach.

The prosperous state of the Jewish nation had always depended upon their obedience to God and his prophets. This flagrant act of disobedience and unbelief would therefore be punished as similar instances of disobedience and obstinacy had been punished before, that is, by great national calamities.

25. That is, I am what I told you before, viz. *the light of the world*. He did not choose to explain himself farther, but left his hearers to judge of his works, what his proper character was.

28. † After the death of Jesus there would be such an evidence of his divine mission and Messiahship, from his resurrection, ascension, and the pouring out of his spirit upon his disciples, as would convince great numbers, and convert them to Christianity.

\* See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 104; N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 389.

† "Ye shall know what I am." N. T. 1729, I. p. 359. See Bowyer, p. 53.



30. Notwithstanding his not assuming the character of a king, the hearers of Jesus might be so much impressed with the excellence of his character, the dignity and energy of his discourses, and the proof that he gave of his divine mission, that they might be in the same state of mind with respect to him, that the apostles and his other professed disciples were; that is, satisfied that he was no impostor, and inclined to believe, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary, that he was the person who would some time or other *redeem* Israel, and assume the character of their *Messiah*: for much farther than this the apostles themselves did not go, before the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of *Pentecost*.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* viii. (14.) It is true that I bear testimony to myself, but what I assert is true, because it relates to a thing in which I cannot be deceived, knowing very well that I have received a commission from God, and that I shall return to him. (15.) But this is what you are not acquainted with, and while you retain your carnal prejudices in favour of a temporal prince for your Messiah, you cannot form a right judgment concerning me. (16.) For this you are justly to be condemned; and though, for the present, I pass no sentence of condemnation upon you, yet if I should do it, it would be just, and would be confirmed by the suffrage of my Father, who is with me, and acts by me. (17.) Now, according to your own maxims, the testimony of two persons is to be received. (18.) And in this case you have not only my own evidence that I have received a commission from God, but the testimony of God himself, in those miraculous works which he has empowered me to do in confirmation of it. (19.) They say unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus, not willing to speak more plainly to persons so exceedingly prejudiced, only replied, He is a person of whom ye know as little as you do of me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. Had you attended to my works, you would have known that they have been performed by the finger of God himself, and therefore that I am the Messiah which he has promised you.

(20.) This discourse Jesus held in the treasury; and though he was so severe and bold, no man apprehended him, Divine Providence reserving him for another time. (21.) Jesus, however, referring to his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, at a future time, said, I go away, and ye shall inquire after the Messiah (who I truly am) in

your troubles, but in vain, for you shall perish by the righteous judgment of God for your manifold wickedness, and especially for your sin in murdering me, when I shall be out of your reach in a place where you cannot come. (22.) The Jews said, What can he mean? Does he intend to withdraw himself from us by a voluntary death? (23.) Jesus said, The true cause of your blindness of heart, and of the just condemnation of which I have been speaking, is to be sought for in your character and views. You are wholly worldly-minded, and cannot relish any Saviour or Messiah, but one who shall appear in great temporal power and splendour; whereas my kingdom is not of this world. I have no views of this nature, and you have no other views. (24.) I foresee, therefore, that the bulk of your nation is doomed to that destruction which will be the unavoidable consequence of your not receiving me in my real character.

(25.) They say unto him, What then is thy proper character, and who art thou? Jesus replies, The same that I told you before, and at the beginning of this discourse, viz. the great light of the world, or the Messiah. (26.) And I have many more things to say to you, and to judge concerning you. At present, however, I confine myself to the publication of what I have received from God, whose truth and veracity may be depended upon.

(27.) Notwithstanding in this our Lord alluded so plainly to his being sent of God, they did not fully understand him. (28.) Then said Jesus, Though you are now so incredulous, and blinded by worldly prejudices, yet after my death and resurrection, many of you will be convinced that I am the Messiah, and that whatever I have delivered to you, I have received in commission from God. (29.) It is his will to which I am wholly devoted, and he constantly speaks and acts by me. (30.) Our Lord having intimated his death by the expression of being *lifted up*, alluding to his crucifixion, many of his hearers probably understood him of a temporal exaltation, and eagerly catching at it, concluded that he might indeed be the Messiah.

## SECTION LI.

*Jesus discourses concerning Abraham's Seed.*

*John viii. 31—59.*

JESUS is now engaged in a very mixed conversation, sometimes with the Scribes and Pharisees, and sometimes



with the people at large, occasioned by his saying, in his figurative way of speaking, that *he was the light of the world*. The Pharisees object to his divine mission, as destitute of proper evidence, and he defends it, as supported not by his own testimony only, but by that of God; intimating withal, that they were not proper judges in the case, as not being in a state of mind to judge impartially about it. With this discourse many persons were so impressed, that the evangelist says they *believed on him*, and to them it is that Jesus now addresses himself.

This discourse was held in that apartment of the Temple, which was called *the Treasury*. This immense and magnificent building had many spacious rooms, courts and porticos, all of which seem to have been open to those who chose to resort to them; and they might either be in the open air, or under cover, as was most convenient. In some of these apartments it is probable that the Scribes, or professed teachers of the law, regularly sat, and taught the people who resorted to them, in the same manner as the philosophers in the schools of Greece.

*John* viii. 31. The sentiment that is here conveyed to us is of the greatest importance. Mere faith in Christ, or belief of his divine mission, will not make us his disciples, to any purpose. We must, as he says, *continue in his word*, we must persevere both in faith and obedience, before we can be entitled to the proper rewards of Christianity.

32. Freedom was the favourite object of all the Jewish nation. This they particularly expected from their *Messiah*, and here Jesus, using the word in a figurative sense, promises them freedom if they would continue in his word: for true freedom, or an emancipation from their subjection to sin and death, would be the sure consequence of their becoming his disciples.

*The truth shall make you free*. It is said to have been at the Feast of Tabernacles, or soon after, in the year of *Jubilee*, that all Jewish slaves were set *free*; and as our Lord alluded to it, this might possibly be that year. If so, it would be a pleasing coincidence with the year in which Christianity was published.

33. *We were never in bondage to any man*. *Pearce*\* supposes that these Jews could not mean their whole nation in a civil respect, it was so very evidently contrary to truth, but that they meant themselves in particular, or the nation

\* *Com.* I. p. 521.

in a moral respect. If this was the year of *Jubilee*, it is probable they might mean themselves, who, having been always free, had not had any occasion to avail themselves of the indulgence granted that year.

37. This Jesus probably said from his knowledge of the fickleness of the common people; being apprized that the same persons who were then attached to him, in expectation perhaps of his some time or other assuming what they thought to be the proper character of the *Messiah*, viz. the *insignia* of regal power, and rescuing them from their subjection to the Romans, would, when they found themselves disappointed in their fonder expectations, be exasperated against him, and become eagerly bent on his destruction.

41. Here the Jews seem to have understood Jesus not as speaking of their natural descent from Abraham, but as asserting that they did not stand in the same relation to God that Abraham did. They therefore assert that they were not that sinful and adulterous generation, which he sometimes said they were, but obedient children of God, as their ancestor Abraham had been.

42.\* If they had God for their Father, and if they were the proper sons of God, they would respect all those who stood in the same relation to him; and especially those who evidently bore his commission, and were his prophets.

43. That is, Why do ye thus cavil at my words, and do not seem to understand me? It is because you have not the right disposition of mind to which you pretend.†

44. The term *Father* was used by the Jews with great latitude, and often in a metaphorical sense, for *head* or *leader*. Thus Abraham is called the *Father of the faithful*, on account of the greatness of his faith. So also wicked men are called in the Old Testament *sons of Belial*; and these wicked Jews who conspired against the life of Jesus, and would not listen to his instructions, are here, in the same figurative sense of the word, said to have learned their bad practices from the source of all evil, termed the *devil*, not a real person any more than *sin* or *death*, which are also sometimes personified in the Scriptures, as I have frequently observed, and explained more at large.

By a slight alteration of the text, Mr. Wakefield renders, *When any one speaketh a lie, he speaketh according to his*

\* See *Theol. Repos.* V. pp. 31, 32; *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 394, 395.

† "Perhaps with a double interrogation." *Doddridge*, (Sect. civ.,) *Bowyer*, p. 55.



*own kindred*: for his father also must have been a liar,\* that is, he by this means discovers that he is of the devil, and not of God.

46. By *sin* in this place is meant not any violation of the law of God, but *imposture*: Jesus had asserted the truth of his divine mission, and though they did not admit this claim, they could not disprove it.

48. To say that a man was a *Samaritan* was as reproachful as saying that he was a *demoniac*, or *insane*; and these Jews thought they could not say less of a man who asserted his own divine mission, and reproached them for their unbelief in it, as he did.

51. I have observed that this discourse of Jesus is far from being a connected one. It was probably delivered with many interruptions, and might consist of what he had taken occasion to say at different times in the course of the day. Having offended his audience by saying that he was *the light of the world*, he now offends them still more, by assuming more than any of the preceding prophets, promising his disciples *everlasting life*, or that they would not *die*, or lose their lives, *for ever*, as this phrase might have been translated, but that he would *raise them up at the last day*.

52.† *The Jews* understood what Jesus had said, literally, that his disciples should never die at all, and thence they take occasion to say that he could be no other than insane. And he, perceiving their prejudice, does not condescend to set them right, by explaining himself farther.

56. It is not easy to say what this refers to.‡ All that *Abraham* saw, or desired to see, that is, in vision, and as future, was the prosperity of his descendants in some distant period. And if the conversion of the Jews to Christianity be any way connected with this future happy state of the Jewish nation, it may be called *the day of the Messiah*.

57. Here again the Jews cavil at the literal meaning of Jesus's expressions, as if he had lived before *Abraham*; but he no more intended this, than he intended to say that his disciples could never die.

58. Jesus, perceiving the perverseness of his audience,

\* See Wakefield's *Notes*, pp. 104, 105, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 391.

† "The best copies read this interrogatively (*Beza, Grotius*)." *Bowyer*, p. 53.

‡ "The best illustration of these words of our Saviour, may be borrowed from *Heb. xi. 13.*" *Turner* in *Harm.* 1780, p. 136. See *Pearce*, I. p. 525, Note (k).

evidently did not mean to give them satisfaction, but, as on a former occasion, continued his figurative way of speaking, rather adding to the enigma of it, than explaining it. But he did not say either that he had seen *Abraham*, or that *Abraham* had seen *him*, but only *his day*.<sup>\*</sup> All that he meant was, that as the future glory and happiness of the posterity of *Abraham* was connected with his kingdom, and that this had been intimated to *Abraham*, this kingdom of his must have been intended in the divine counsels before the time of *Abraham*. In like manner *Jesus* speaks of the *glory* that he had with God, *before the world was*, though he at the same time speaks of that very glory as the reward of his sufferings, and therefore not to be conferred till a future period. Christians are also said to be *chosen* in Christ, (*Eph.* i. 4,) *before the foundation of the world*, though it is certain they had no being at that time. But in the eye of God, whatever is to be, may be said already to exist; with him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.

*I am.*<sup>†</sup> Christ had used these words twice before in this discourse, in both which places our translators have added the word *he*; why they have not done the same here, it is difficult to assign a good reason. (*Ver.* 24.) “If ye believe not that (εγω ειμι) I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.” (*Ver.* 28.) “When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that (εγω ειμι) I am *he*.” In both these passages I presume that we are to understand *he that was promised*; or, in the words of the Baptist, (*Matt.* xi. 3,) *he that should come*. So here;—*before Abraham was, I am he that should come*, or *I am he that was promised before Abraham was.*<sup>‡</sup>

59. *And so passed by.* These words are not found in many MSS. and probably are not genuine.<sup>§</sup>

## PARAPHRASE.

*John* viii. (31.) *Jesus*, addressing himself to those who began to entertain thoughts of his being the Messiah, said, If you hold fast my doctrine, and regulate your lives by it, you shall be my disciples indeed. (32.) And in due time

<sup>\*</sup> *Lardner*, (“On the Logos,”) XI. p. 90. See *Pearce*, I. p. 525; *Impr. Vers.* p. 238.

<sup>†</sup> “That is, *I was*.” See *Pearce*, I. p. 525, Note (m.)

<sup>‡</sup> *Turner*. (*P.*) See *Theol. Repos.* II. p. 74; III. pp. 146, 441, 442; IV. pp. 348—352; *Wakefield’s Enquiry*, pp. 125—130; *Notes*, pp. 106, 107, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 392.

<sup>§</sup> See *Pearce*, I. p. 526. (*P.*)



shall be instructed in the whole extent of my divine commission, and be thereby raised to a state of dignity and freedom, peculiar to those whose minds are so enlightened. (33.) They, considering this as a reflection upon them, replied, We are the descendants of Abraham, and being the favourite people of God, are under no moral servitude whatever. (34.) Jesus answered, In that you have been sinners, governed by your irregular appetites and passions, you may properly enough be said to have been slaves to sin. (35.) Besides, admitting that you are the servants of God, you cannot, as such, be sure of a permanent establishment in his family; but the son and heir has not only a permanent establishment in the family, but also a considerable power in it. (36.) If he therefore make you free, you shall be no longer in the capacity of servants; and I shall exalt all my faithful followers to the privilege of being the proper sons of God.

(37.) I know that you are the natural descendants of Abraham, but what will that avail you, when you act a part so unworthy of that relationship, as appears by your seeking to kill me, because you dislike my doctrine? (38.) It is indeed true that both you and I adopt the sentiments and imitate the conduct of our proper respective fathers. (39.) They, suspecting from this that he was going to deny that they were the proper children of Abraham, said, Certainly you will not deny that we are the children of Abraham in every proper sense of the word. (40.) But indeed, replies our Lord, I do deny it; for if you were the children of Abraham, in the sense in which you may perceive that I now use the word, you would do the works of Abraham. But your seeking to kill me for telling you the truth, is a proof that you are not the proper children of Abraham, for certainly Abraham would not have done so. (41.) You do the works of your proper father. They reply, Do you pretend that we are not the descendants of Abraham, but of Gentile families? We are certainly his seed, and in a moral sense, of the same Father that he had, even God.

(42.) Jesus said, If God were indeed your Father, you would love me, because I am come immediately from him, and do not come of myself. (43.) And if you be of the same family with me, why do ye not understand my language? Is it not because you are so prejudiced that you will not give due attention to me? (44.) In fact your father, in a moral sense, is no other than the devil; because you are wholly bent upon wickedness, and one of the first crimes

that was committed in the world (and which it is usual to ascribe to him, as the nominal source and principle of evil) was a murder, viz. that of Abel by Cain. Lying and deceit are also of the same nature, and therefore are usually ascribed to the same origin, and for this reason you cannot bear the plain truth that I have told you. (45.) You cannot convict me of any falsehood, and yet you do not believe me. If you were, as you pretend to be, of God, you would attend to the word of God delivered by me; but your not regarding me, proves that you are not of God, but of a different and opposite origin.

(48.) The Jews, irritated at his discourse, said, It appears sufficiently that we are right in concluding that thou art no better than a Samaritan, or a demoniac. (49.) Jesus replied, My conduct is far from being that of a demoniac. I honour my Father, acting up to the commission which I have received from him, and you revile me for it. (50.) But this does not affect me, because I am not solicitous about my own glory with persons of your character. My glory is the care of him who sees us, and will judge between us. (51.) So greatly will he honour me, that all those who hear and obey me, shall not die eternally.

(52.) Then said the Jews, Now it is plain enough that thou art a demoniac. Abraham and all the prophets are dead, and yet thou pretendest that thy disciples shall not die. (53.) Art thou possessed of any prerogative over our father Abraham, or the prophets, who are all dead? Whom dost thou pretend to be? (54.) Jesus replies, It is not that I pretend to be any thing of myself. All the honours that I have are those which my Father is pleased to confer upon me, and my Father is he whom you call your God. (55.) It is plain, however, that you know very little of him; but it is my prerogative to have the most intimate knowledge of him; and if I should deny, and not avow it, even to you who ridicule me for pretending to it, I should be a liar as you are; but I do know him, and am wholly devoted to his will. (56.) Moreover, greatly as you boast of your descent from Abraham, it would have been his greatest happiness to have seen the time of my coming into the world, and by faith he did see it, in sure prospect, and rejoiced at it.

(57.) How can that be, replied the Jews, who did not understand his meaning, Thou canst not be fifty years old at most, and wert thou contemporary with Abraham? (58.) I do assure you, said Jesus, that, in a very proper sense of



the words, I may be said to have been even before Abraham, the Messiah having been held forth as the great object of hope and joy for the human race, not only to Abraham, but even to his ancestors. (59.) Upon this the Jews, unable to restrain their indignation any longer, would have stoned him, if he, being aware of their design, had not withdrawn himself from their pursuit.

## SECTION LII.

### *Of the Man who was blind from his Birth.*

*John ix. 1—41.*

JESUS never wrought more than two miracles at Jerusalem of which we have any particular account; but they are both very remarkable for two circumstances, as they are both peculiarly unquestionable, and both performed on the Sabbath-day. The first was at the feast of *Pentecost*, of which we have an account in the fifth chapter of this Gospel. The subject was a person who had been ill thirty-eight years, and had long waited at the pool of *Bethesda*, which was a public place; so that his person and his case must have been very generally known. Consequently the suddenness of his cure would be very notorious, and could not be denied to be miraculous. And yet so great offence did the rulers of the Jews take at this benevolent miracle being wrought on the Sabbath-day, that from that time they formed a design upon his life.

*John ix. 1.* The subject of the miracle of which we have an account in this chapter, is a man who had been *blind from his birth*, and who had got his living by begging in public; and perhaps no persons are better known in any place than blind beggars. The cure of such a person, therefore, would have all the effect that any miracle could have; so that if this failed to produce conviction, more miracles would have failed, and therefore would have been superfluous. But even this miracle, being wrought on the Sabbath-day, gave the same offence as the former.

This story is particularly remarkable for the simplicity with which it is told, and the introduction of so many natural circumstances as make it in a manner its own voucher; it being hardly possible for any man to have invented all the particulars.

2. It may perhaps be thought to deserve mentioning, that

it was the opinion of the Jewish *Rabbies*, that bad dispositions were formed even in the womb, so that strictly speaking, a man might begin to sin *before he was born*.

*Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* Pearce\* well observes, that this text is no proof of the Jews in general having adopted "the belief of a transmigration of souls," because the disciples, not being certain that he was born blind, might mean, did this man sin, and so became blind by the judgment of God upon himself; or, if he was born blind, was it owing to the sin of his parents, and therefore a judgment upon them. The Jews mentioned, *ver.* 8, did not believe that this man had been born blind, till they had applied to his parents. It is evident from *Josephus* that the learned Jews did afterwards adopt the doctrines of the separate existence and pre-existence of the soul, (which always went together,) but from the discourse of Martha and Jesus, (*John xi.*,) it does not appear to have been so early as this. Indeed it does not appear that those opinions were ever generally prevalent among them.

6. It was so common a thing to apply ointments and plaisters to diseased eyes, that this man might possibly imagine there was some medicinal virtue in what Jesus did on this occasion.

7. We cannot well imagine why the evangelist should inform us that the word *Siloam* signified *sent*, if he had not thought that Jesus himself might allude to it; the phrase *sent*, or *he that should come*, &c., being a well-known name or title of the *Messiah* with the Jews.

13. Probably before a public court, where *the Pharisees* had the chief influence.

14. It was a particular decision of the Jewish doctors, that it was unlawful even to put spittle upon sore eyes on the Sabbath-day,† this being a medicinal application, implying manual work.

16. By *sinner* we are here to understand *impostor*.

22. *Put out of the Synagogue*. The Jews had two kinds of excommunication, one which separated them four cubits from the society of others, but left them free, at that distance, to hear the law expounded in the synagogue. This was called *niddui*, the other was called *shematti*, answering,

\* *Com.* I. pp. 527, 528. On "the opinion of the *Pharisees*, that only such as had led good lives had the power of entering into other bodies," see *Jos. Antig.* B. xviii. Ch. i. Sect. iii.; *War.* B. ii. Ch. viii. Sect. xiv.; *Wisd.* viii. 19, 20; *Le Clerc*, N. T. p. 296; *Doddridge*, (Sect. cxxxiii.) Note (b).

† *Maimonides* in *Wotton*, II. p. 108.



perhaps, to *maranatha*, in Syriac. This excluded a person from the synagogue for ever, and in other respects subjected a person to a variety of inconveniences of a civil nature. This was probably the punishment that was generally inflicted on Christians.

30. It must indeed have appeared very extraordinary that a man capable of performing a real miracle should be treated as an impostor, or even with neglect, as if they neither knew nor cared who he was, which seems to be the meaning of what they say.

33. There is much good sense and propriety, but which the Pharisees considered as insolence, in this man's discourse, so that it is no wonder that they were provoked at it.

34. *Born in sin*. A proverbial expression, signifying being addicted to the most rooted evil habits, and from early years.

37. This was the third time that Jesus owned himself to be the *Messiah*, to the woman of Samaria, to his disciples in private,\* and now to this man who was probably alone. None of them amount to a public declaration, such as was likely to come to the knowledge of the Jewish rulers. That he reserved for a future occasion.

39—41. The characters here opposed seem to be those of the humble and sincere inquirers, who are sensible of their ignorance and willing to receive instruction, and of the proud and opinionative, who reject whatever clashes with their present sentiments; and the *sin* here intended, is that of rejecting the dispensation of the will of God now offered to the world.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John ix. (41.)* Jesus said unto them, If you were really blind, you would not be really criminal, because you would not have abused any light that was vouchsafed to you; but the knowledge that you have is an aggravation of your sin in rejecting me.

### SECTION LIII.

#### *The Parable of the good Shepherd.*

*John x. 1—21.*

THIS is a continuation of the same discourse that Jesus held with the Pharisees, which was begun in the last

\* See *supra*, pp. 59, 183, 184.

chapter, in which he had charged them with their guilt in rejecting him, and plotting against his life, notwithstanding the evidence that he had given them of his divine mission.

*John* x. 1, 2. In this parable Jesus compares himself to *the good Shepherd*, and the Scribes and Pharisees to *thieves and robbers of the fold*, led to it perhaps by the pens of sheep, which were kept either in the outer courts of the Temple, or in some place near to it, for the purpose of sacrifices;\* for he was not now in the open fields. It is the more likely to be so because we find mention made of a *porter* who let in the shepherd, admitting him probably into the place where his sheep were kept, knowing that he was the owner.

This parable is a fine illustration of what he had just asserted, *Chap.* ix. 39, by shewing the ready obedience wherewith the humble and sincere would embrace the gospel, and the benefits they should derive from thence. And the behaviour of the people after the delivery of the parable, as mentioned in *verses* 20, 21, still farther confirmed both parts of that assertion by facts.

3. *Calleth his own sheep by name.* It appears from hence, that it was the custom with the Jewish shepherds to give names to their sheep; and the custom is also found among the Greeks, as appears from *Theocritus*.

4. In the East, sheep are accustomed to *follow* their shepherd.

7. As they did not understand him when he compared himself to *a shepherd*, he now changes the allusion and calls himself *the door*, through which we may be said to enter into the sheep-fold, or church of God, learning of him the true knowledge of God. To explain the same thing he elsewhere calls himself *the way*, [*John* xiv. 6,] “I am the way, and the truth, and the life,” or I shew the way to eternal life.

8. Meaning probably the Scribes and Pharisees, the professed leaders and guides of the people. For it does not appear that any who were before Jesus had pretended to be the *Messiah*.†

\* “Jesus being near the Temple, where sheep were kept in folds to be sold for the sacrifices, spake many things parabolically of sheep, of the shepherd, and of the door to the sheepfold; and discovers that he alluded to the sheepfolds which were to be hired in the market-place, by speaking of such folds as a thief could not enter by the door, nor the shepherd himself open, but a porter opened to the shepherd.”

*Sir Isaac Newton* (on *Daniel*, p. 148). *Pearce*, l. p. 532.

† Yet see *Acts* v. 36, 37.



11.\* Jesus here reverts to his original comparison of himself to a *shepherd*. This frequent change of figures to represent the same thing may prepare us to understand that when Christ is called a *sacrifice*, it was only by way of figure or comparison, and that he was no more a proper *sacrifice* than he was really a *door*, or a *shepherd*. For he is said to have been all of these. Every man who dies in a good cause may be said to die a sacrifice to it.

18.† This can never mean, as some suppose, that Jesus had so far power over his own life that he could dismiss his spirit, and die whenever he pleased, without any apparent violence to himself. For though he might have had this, as well as any other miraculous power, it could not be his meaning in this place. It has indeed been supposed that he did, in this miraculous manner, dismiss his spirit, when he expired upon the cross, after uttering *the strong cry* that is mentioned in the account of his death. But there was probably a mixture of convulsion in that cry, and the effort would naturally contribute to exhaust the little that remained of the powers of life. We nowhere find that he spared himself any pains or hardships, and least of all, would he do so when he was to be an example of suffering death to his disciples: for then he would have availed himself of an advantage, which they had not, and in fact would have set an example of self-murder. According to appearance, his death was the proper and natural effect of torture, after being exhausted by his severe agony in the garden, and his other cruel sufferings.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* x. (8.) All who have gone before me, or will come after me, pretending to be the Messiah, are impostors, whom those that have the discernment that even sheep have for their own shepherd, would not, and will not follow.

(15.) As the Father knows and honours me, so do I know and honour my Father, and in conformity to his will I even lay down my life for the sheep, that is, my disciples; and not only for those of them who are Jews, but for those

\* "The true Pastor *exposes* his life." N. T. 1729, I. p. 366. "Ventureth his life." *Pearce*, I. p. 533. See "what Paul says of Aquila and Priscilla, who were both then living. *Rom.* xvi. 3—5." *Ibid.* See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 109, N. T. Ed. 1, p. 394.

† For *commandment* it is proposed to translate *promise*. See *Psalms* xvi. 10; *Le Cene*, pp. 439, 440; *Essay*, 1727, p. 213.

Gentiles also, who in due time will be brought into my sheepfold, by embracing my gospel.

(17.) It is on account of this cheerful and unreserved obedience to his will, that God the Father loves me; and when I lay down my life he will shew his approbation of me, by enabling me to resume it.

(18.) All this I submit to voluntarily, and not because I am compelled to it by my enemies, whom, if I pleased, I have power to disarm and confound; but in obedience to my Father's known will and pleasure, I shall both lay down my life and take it again.

## SECTION LIV.

*The Return of the Seventy; the Parable of the good Samaritan; Jesus entertained by Martha and Mary.*

*Luke x. 17—42.*

LUKE has been observed to pay the least regard to the order of time of any of the evangelists, so that it is difficult to arrange the order of those events which are related by him only, as the mission and return of the seventy disciples, mentioned in this place. They seem to have been sent out as Jesus was on his way from *Galilee to the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem*, but when they returned is quite uncertain; since they might attend at the feast, and then return to complete their mission. And where Jesus was, and what he did, from the time of this feast to that of the dedication, which was in winter, we have no account whatever. I have therefore introduced into this place all the particulars mentioned by this evangelist from the tenth to the eighteenth chapter, which follow the mention that he has made of the return of *the Seventy*, (as this must have been after *the Feast of Tabernacles*,) and to which there is annexed no particular note of time.

*Luke x. 17.* We have no account of any particulars of the missions either of the *Twelve* or of the *Seventy*; but it is evident that miracles were wrought by both these sets of missionaries, and here mention is made of that kind which was always, and most justly, considered as one of the most extraordinary, viz. restoring to the perfect use of their senses those who had been insane; insanity being incurable by natural means, except in a long course of time; so that



to have produced this effect *instantaneously*, by a word speaking, must have appeared very extraordinary indeed.

18. *I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven*; that is, falling as rapidly as lightning seems to fall from heaven. By *Satan* is here meant the supposed cause of possession, and may be extended to evils of all kinds, moral as well as natural.

19. This could not refer to any thing that took place during the ministry of Jesus, but must refer to their mission after his ascension. And this exemption from hurt only meant upon certain occasions, when their deliverance would answer the end of a miracle to convince the world of their divine mission. On ordinary occasions, neither Jesus himself, nor any of his followers, were exempt from the common evils of life, or from the greater calamities incident to their profession in the time of persecution. Accordingly the Apostle Paul enumerates more of his sufferings than fall to the common lot of men; and most of the apostles, as well as Jesus himself, died violent deaths. For this no recompence can be made but in the world to come.

20. That is, moral virtue, such as will entitle men to the happiness of heaven, is of infinitely more value than any miraculous gifts. Accordingly Jesus supposes, that at the last day some may plead that they even worked miracles in his name, who yet would be rejected by him.

21. Our Lord here expresses himself in a manner partly similar to that in which *Matthew* (xi. 25) represents him as delivering himself on the return of the twelve.

It was more conducive to the great end of the propagation of the gospel, that the first converts should not be persons distinguished for their wealth, their power, or their ability; because, in after ages, it might then have been said, that it was by power, or by address, that mankind were drawn into the scheme. But none of the apostles were more than plain honest men, who could not have been deceived themselves with respect to what they heard and saw, and yet were incapable of imposing upon others had they been so inclined. They had neither wealth to bribe men, power to compel them, nor address to cajole them. They were believed, because it was manifest that they told the truth, and the truth which they had no visible interest in telling, and especially in suffering and dying for.

24. They had wished to see the times of the *Messiah* which are foretold in the ancient *prophets*. It was a hap-

pineness to live in times in which the great dispensations of God respecting mankind were so much farther advanced than they were in the times of those prophets. But it is a greater happiness to live in our times when they are more advanced still, when Christianity has recovered itself from many of the corruptions and abuses which were introduced into it; and when we have a nearer prospect of its universal spread, and universal utility.

28. We see here that Jesus had no new moral doctrines to teach. In this respect he only explained the law and the prophets in their original extent; and on these moral duties he laid the same stress as the prophets of old had done, who urged them as the only means by which men could be accepted of God. How different is this from the doctrine that some professing Christians teach, who say that we are to be saved not by any thing that we can do for ourselves, which Jesus plainly supposes, but by something that he should do for us; a doctrine to which nothing that he, or the apostles, ever advanced, gave the least countenance.

30. An excellent parable to shew that we are not to inquire into the relation that an object of distress bears to us. It is enough that the afflicted are men, and therefore feel as we should do in the same circumstances.

The scene of this parable is with great propriety laid in the road between *Jerusalem* and *Jericho*, which was mountainous, and very convenient for robbers. One particular pass is still called the *mountain of blood*, or the *bloody road*,\* a name probably acquired from the murders of passers.

34. Places to accommodate travellers in the East are of very different kinds. In most of them there is only room to receive them and their goods; but in others, persons are appointed to attend, and supply them with any thing that they want.

35. *Two pence*, that is, two Roman *denarii*, which make about sixpence, as much as a traveller might have to spare.

41. This is a beautiful incident in the life of Jesus, and shews how intent he always was upon the discharge of the great duties of his mission, to teach men the will of God, and to postpone every thing else to it. *Martha* was not ill employed, but Jesus thought that she busied herself more than there was any real occasion for. From other circum-

\* *Shaw's Travels*, p. 276. (P.)



stances in the history of these two women, it is probable they were both equally excellent characters, and accordingly Jesus had a particular respect for them both, as well as for their brother Lazarus, whom we shall find he raised from the dead.

42. *One thing is needful*, that is, the things relating to eternal life.\*

### PARAPHRASE.

*Luke* x. (22.) All things relating to the kingdom of righteousness which God will erect in the world, are committed to me. The Father alone knows the full extent of my powers and commission; and that knowledge of God which was reserved for this dispensation, cannot be communicated to the world but by me.

### SECTION LV.

*Jesus inveighs against the Pharisees, and against Covetousness.*

*Luke* xi. 37—54; xii. 13—21.

*LUKE* xi. 37—39. It appears from what passed at the entertainment of which we have an account in this place, that the invitation was probably made with a captious intent; and indeed the extreme severity with which Jesus treated the whole company, can hardly be justified upon any other supposition; for it does not appear that, on proper occasions, he was ever wanting in candour or civility.

40. By *that which is within*, Jesus evidently meant the heart, or the inward disposition of the mind, having before said that *their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness*. And certainly if a respect to any thing, as that which God respects, be a reason for our attention to it, the heart of man is that which deserves our chief regard; the affections of the heart being the foundation of all good conduct, and consequently of all acceptance with God.

41. The chief outline of the character of these Pharisees,

\* Another sense of this passage, which *Doddridge* (Sect. cviii. Note f) denounced as "the frigid impertinence of Theophylact and Basil," has been thus adopted by a learned modern prelate, who refers to *Mark* ii. 25, where "the word *χρεια* is used after the same manner, for want of food:

"*There is need of one thing only; (of one dish only, for me to eat of;) but Mary hath chosen the good part (of hearing my word).*" *Pearce*, I. p. 368. See *Impr. Vers.* p. 163.

against whom Jesus inveighs with so much vehemence, was their addictedness to the vices of avarice and hypocrisy; and therefore he speaks of *alms* on this occasion. How opposite was the doctrine that Jesus here taught, to the maxims of the Pharisees, who laid the chief stress on trifling punctilios of conduct, and who overlooked the weightier and more important matters of the law!

44. *Graves which appear not*, as with grass growing over them, so that if they be shut, men stumble upon them, and if they be open they fall into them, and are defiled with the touch of the dead body.

45. To be a *doctor*, or teacher of the law, was probably an office, whereas *Pharisee* was the name of a sect; but it is probable that the doctors were chiefly Pharisees. In what respects they differed from the *Scribes* does not clearly appear. Perhaps they are the same who are sometimes called *lawyers*, being employed as our advocates, or attorneys, in courts of justice. And it must be observed, that the law of Moses was the civil law of the Jews, as the *Koran* is that of the Mahometans, the decisions in the courts of justice being regulated by it.

48.\* That is, notwithstanding you think to do honour to the prophets, by building them magnificent *sepulchres*, yet your tempers and conduct so much resemble those of your fathers who killed them, that the building of the sepulchres may seem to be the act of those who approved of their murder, the one finishing what the other had begun, the fathers putting them to death, and the sons burying them.

49. The corresponding passage in *Matt.* xxiii. 34, is only *I send*, without this circumstance of *the wisdom of God*,† which makes it look as if it had a reference to some passage in the prophets, whereas no such thing is found in them. It is probable, therefore, that by this phrase nothing more was meant than that God, in his wisdom, would send them the *prophets* he speaks of.

51. *The blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple*, referring probably to that *Zachariah* who is said, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20, 21, to have been slain in that very

\* "Do ye bear witness (and yet do ye consent to the deeds of your fathers?) that they killed those whose sepulchres ye build?" *Pearce*, I. p. 375.

† "*Pearce* [I. p. 375] supposes that by *the wisdom of God*, is meant *Christ*, and that those are the words of the evangelist. But it appears to me that they are the words of Jesus, who, by *the wisdom of God*, meant *God*, or *God in his wisdom*; and though the very words which he represents as spoken by God are not found in the Old Testament, there are a variety of passages which express the same thing." *Harm.* 1780, p. 144. See *Doddridge* (Sect. cx. Note i).



place. He is there said to be the son of *Jehoiada*; and as Zachariah the prophet was the son of *Barachiah*, this Zachariah is so called in *Matthew* xxiii. 35. The mistake was probably made by some transcriber, who thought to explain who this Zachariah was, or it might have been written hastily by Matthew himself.

52. It is said that the authority to teach the law among the Jews was given by the delivery of a *key*, as a symbol of their office.\* One of their *Rabbies* is said to have had his key buried with him.

54. From this it appears that the whole company were met with this captious design; but Jesus, without sparing them, gave them no particular handle for their malicious purpose.

xii. 1. It does not appear at what period of his ministry Jesus delivered the discourses contained in this *chapter*; but they consist of excellent instructions, adapted to all times, and to persons in all situations of life.

13, 14. As many of the ancient prophets were judges, and acted in a civil capacity, this man might apply to Jesus without any captious design. His reply, however, shews that his business was not to act as a temporal judge, but in a much higher capacity; and therefore he takes occasion from it to give advice suited particularly to the case of those persons who, through covetousness, could not agree about the division of an estate, and in general to all persons under the influence of the same low principle.

15. *The life of no one dependeth on the abundance of his possessions.*† He is still subject to death, though ever so rich.

19. *I will say to my soul.*‡ *Pearce* would render it, *I will say to my life*. But the word soul seems to be often used to denote the *percipient faculties*. Thus God himself is represented as saying, *My soul shall have no pleasure in him*, and as making use of other expressions of the same kind. It could not, therefore, imply that the Divine Being consisted of two principles, of which the soul was only one. In fact, the expression is only equivalent to *myself*. It could not be used in any other sense in this place; for what is properly called a soul cannot eat and drink.

20. *This night shall thy soul be required of thee*, that is,

\* See *Le Cene*, p. 286; *Dodson*, (on *Isaiah* viii. 16,) pp. 17, 201.

† *Wakefield*. (*P.*) "All the eastern translators agree in giving this turn to the verse." *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 64, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 351.

‡ *Com. I.* p. 379.

this night thy *life* shall be taken from thee, or, this night thou shalt die.

21. *Rich towards God.* Whose treasure is with God, or laid up in his custody, and of which he will give an account at the last.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Luke xi. (48.)* In fact, when your conduct is compared with that of your forefathers, notwithstanding this token of respect which you pay to the dead prophets, one would imagine that it had a contrary meaning, and that they were the same kind of persons who both killed the prophets and buried them, the burial being but a continuation of the same proceeding.

### SECTION LVI.

*Of the Galileans whom Pilate slew. The Parable of the Vineyard, and the Cure of an infirm Woman.*

*Luke xiii. 1—17.*

OUR Saviour's most instructive discourses were generally occasioned by incidental circumstances; and this must have given them peculiar force. In many of them we find that he had a view to peculiar circumstances of the Jewish nation, a nation then ripe for destruction, which could only be averted by sincere repentance. This, therefore, was the great burthen of the preaching of *Jesus*, as well as that of *John the Baptist*, before him, and of the apostles after *them* both. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;—repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,* was the substance of all their addresses, and this is a subject that can never be unseasonable. All men are sinners, and therefore stand in need of repentance, and unless that repentance be in *time*, it will be of no avail.

1. *Galileans.* Probably the followers of *Judas Gaulonites*, who had before put himself at the head of a sect of Jews, who maintained that God was their only sovereign, and that subjection to the Romans, or any earthly power, ought not to be suffered. It was to him, probably, that *Gamaliel* alluded, *Acts v. 37.\**

2. Many of the Jews did suffer in the same manner,

\* See *Le Clerc*, N. T. p. 135; *Doddridge* (Sect. cxvi. Note a).



great numbers of them being slain in the Temple, which they used as a fortification in their war with the Romans.

6. It was usual to couple *vines* with *fig-trees*, that the one might be supported by the other.

8. It should seem that we are not to understand by this the *digging* with a spade about a fig-tree, for spades were not used in vineyards; but the turning up of the ground between the rows of the trees with an instrument drawn by oxen.\* As this, however, was a *fig-tree*, and not a *vine*, it might be treated in a manner different from vines, though planted in the vineyard.

9. This parable has the same object with the preceding, viz. to shew the necessity of repentance in time.

It is said not to be customary in the East to do more in an orchard than plough the ground between the trees. Here something more was proposed, in order to give the tree the greater advantage.

11. The Jews ascribed almost every obstinate disorder to the influence of some evil spirit, giving the spirit the name of the particular disease. Thus we read of an *unclean spirit*, to signify a disease which led persons into circumstances which, in the Jewish law, made them unclean. In like manner, a *deaf and a dumb spirit* means the cause of deafness and dumbness; and what is here called a *spirit of infirmity*, only means a disorder that rendered a person infirm.

13. The miraculous nature of the cures performed by Jesus, is evident from the nature of the diseases that were cured by him. Thus this person had been infirm *eighteen years*, so that, according to the course of nature, no speedy relief could be expected. Also, when a person through weakness has become crooked, and on that account unable to walk upright, which was the case with this woman, being suddenly enabled to walk erect, was as evident a proof of a power properly miraculous, as any thing that could be proposed.†

\* See Harner, II. p. 433. (P.)

† Dr. Mead says, "This woman was *συγκυπτασα*, that is, *stooping forward*: being unable *ανακυβειν*, or to *lift up her head*. Now that spirit, according to the common way of speaking of the Jews, was Satan; for thus Christ himself, answering the ruler of the synagogue, who was angry that the woman had been cured on the sabbath day, says, that *Satan had held her bound these eighteen years*. And exactly in the same sense Saint Mark (ix. 17) employs *πνευμα αλαλον* for a spirit, which obstructed the faculty of speech. This infirmity often befalls those who have been very long afflicted with a disorder of the loins: whence the muscular fibres of that part become contracted and rigid. Wherefore it is very probable, that this tedious disease proceeded from that very cause, and was curable by the divine assistance only." *Med. Sacr.* (Ch. xii.) pp. 104, 105.

14. The perverseness of this Jewish *ruler of the synagogue* appears in his not addressing himself to Jesus, but only to the people who came to be cured. Besides, any person, not under the influence of the most unreasonable prejudice, would have concluded that a man who acted, as Jesus did, by the immediate power of God, could not do an unlawful thing.\*

15. This was allowed by the most scrupulous of the Jews, though they thought it wrong to go to fetch water for their cattle.

17. It is evident from this, and many other circumstances, that the bulk of the Jewish nation did not adopt all the idle distinctions of their teachers, and that they were not all influenced by their prejudices and malice. Besides, the rulers of the nation expected to reign with their *Messiah*, and to enjoy high offices under him, which could not be the case with the common people; and though the Scribes and Pharisees might clearly see that Jesus was the Messiah, they had no favour to expect from him.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Luke* xiii. (2.) Do not suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than the rest of the Jewish nation, who are all ripe for destruction; but this was permitted, that the rest might take warning and repent. Whether these individuals were good or bad men, personally considered, makes no difference in this case. Such events are intended to awaken and alarm all.

### SECTION LVII.

*The Cure of the Man who had a Dropsy. Of Humility, and of suffering in the Cause of Christ.*

*Luke* xiv. 1—33.

**LUKE** xiv. 1. Though the Jews rested from labour *on the sabbath*, they did not abstain from feasting, and receiving their friends. On the contrary, they rather preferred that day for the purpose, nor was this imagined by them to be inconsistent with the religious exercises of the synagogue.

\* "He broke no sabbatic law in working this miracle, for he only spoke to her, and laid his hands upon her, neither of which were forbidden by their decrees." *Wotton*, I. p. 281.



It is probable that this invitation, like the former, was made with a captious design.

2. This *man* was probably presented with the knowledge of the host; for being a person of considerable consequence, a diseased man would hardly have obtruded himself upon the company without leave.

3. As thus stated, the Jews could not say that what Jesus proposed was unlawful; for they only objected to *medicinal applications*, as being a species of *bodily labour*.

4. This was the cure of a disorder that could not by natural means have been cured so soon.

5. The Jews acknowledged that where life was in danger, labour was lawful, even *on the sabbath-day*.

7. The Pharisees were particularly scrupulous about placing persons according to their rank with respect to their knowledge in the law, on which account chiefly they were revered by the common people. This advice of Jesus is properly an admonition concerning decency and propriety of behaviour, which the fondness of the Pharisees for popular applause led them to violate.

11. This observation is made, some have said, no less than ten times in *the New Testament*; and it is certainly of the greatest importance; an humble temper of mind implying a deep sense of dependence upon God, which is the foundation of almost every thing that is excellent in man; and the opposite disposition leads to every thing that is the reverse of the Christian temper. In the *Old Testament*, the *proud* and the *wicked* are commonly used as synonymous terms.

12. It is possible that this Pharisee had, out of ostentation, invited the most considerable persons of his acquaintance to this entertainment,\* at which Jesus was to be present.

*Call not thy friends.* Our Lord could not mean that friends are not to entertain one another, but from the turn of the whole he appears to mean, If you would make a feast, from which you would derive real merit, and which will turn to your greatest account, make one for which no recompence can be made by man, but by God only.

13. It is customary in the East, after a sumptuous entertainment, to call in the poor to eat up all that remains of the feast; and hospitable persons will often call poor

\* See *Reading's Life of Christ*, (p. 256,) in *Doddridge* (Sect. cxix. Note h).

strangers and others, to partake of their dinner, rather than dine alone.

14. It is very observable that, not only upon this occasion, but on all others, in the New Testament, the promise of the reward of virtue is represented as taking place at the general *resurrection*, and not before, so that the doctrine of *an intermediate state* of happiness and misery from the time of death to the resurrection, is no doctrine of the Scriptures. In no passage whatever is *the body* said to be in one place, and *the soul*, with its thinking faculties, in another. The dead are said *to sleep in Jesus; their lives being hid with Christ in God, that when Christ who is, or has possession, as it were of their life, or to whose keeping they are committed, shall appear; then, but not before, shall they appear with him in glory.* With respect to the apostles themselves, Jesus said, [*John* xiv. 3,] “I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, *there* ye may be also.”

15. *Eat bread, &c.\** That is, who shall live in the times of the *Messiah*, and enjoy the felicities of his reign.

26. *Hate not his father and mother.* The meaning is, that we should prefer the cause of Christ to all earthly considerations. So also when it is said, [*Rom.* ix. 13,] “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” the meaning is, I have loved Jacob more than Esau. *Pearce* produces other phrases of the like import.†

Here our Lord admonishes us that the profession of Christianity is a serious thing, and requires great firmness of mind, if we mean to live up to the profession, and secure the proper and great rewards of it.

33. We ought, therefore, to consider well with ourselves, whether we are determined to maintain the profession and practice of Christianity at all risks. Without this, we are no Christians, but merely *men of the world*, who *follow the multitude*, which happens to be what is called *Christian*; but who, from the same principle, would have been *Mahometans* or *Pagans*. To be *Christians indeed*, we must be so in principle, and from reflection, weighing well the truth and the value of the profession, and determined to give up every thing, even life itself, that may be required by it.

\* “Rather *that eateth bread.* This appears to be the meaning from the parable which follows.” *Pearce*, I. p. 391.

† *Com.* I. p. 393. “*Matthew* (x. 37) expresses the true meaning of this, when he says, *loveth his father and mother more than me.* It may be added that in *Matt.* vi. 24, the word *hate* is used after the same manner. So *Rom.* ix. 13.” *Ibid.*



## SECTION LVIII.

*The Parable of the lost Sheep, the lost Piece of Money, and of the Prodigal Son.*

*Luke xv. 1—32.*

**LUKE xv. 1.** The discourses in this chapter seem to follow that of the last. But as Jesus here addresses himself to *publicans and sinners* only, though in the hearing of the Pharisees, it is not probable that he was now in the house of the chief Pharisee, with whom he had dined.

*Publicans*, or those persons who collected the tribute for the Romans, were held in great abhorrence by the Jews, to whom the Roman yoke was very galling, thinking it both disgraceful, and in a manner unlawful, for many of them thought it their duty, at all risks, to emancipate themselves from it. The publicans are commonly joined with *sinners*, or infamous persons; and in general when an office is infamous, it will be filled with persons of infamous character. On this, and on many other occasions, the discourses of Jesus are calculated to expose the pride and self-conceit of the Pharisees; shewing his own conduct, and that of his Father, to be the reverse of theirs; in not despising or rejecting the lowest and even the most abandoned of men, but kindly receiving them upon their return to their duty.

3. These parables shew, in a striking manner, that as we give more attention to what we are in the most danger of losing; so our Lord was justified in bestowing more time upon sinners, to bring them to repentance, than upon others.

9. For though this *piece* of silver, being only a *drachma*, or eight-pence of our money, was small in itself, it was a tenth part of her whole substance.

10. This was a customary phrase with the Jews; but they generally applied it to the fall of sinners, not their repentance.\*

11. This is perhaps the most beautiful and instructive of all our Saviour's parables, and abounds with the most important lessons, speculative and practical; exhibiting more especially a lively and affecting representation of the placability of God to penitent sinners, without atonement, and

\* See Gregory's *Notes*, 1650, pp. 135, 136.

without upbraiding. Some think that this parable was intended to represent the state of the Jews and Gentiles, the former being compared to the elder son, and the latter to the younger.

12. Probably not the half, because the elder son, according to the law of Moses, was entitled to a double portion of his father's property.

In the East, the laws of inheritance are generally such, that it is not in the power of any parent to refuse to give any of his children a certain proportion of his property when they come to age, much less to bequeath their property to whom they please, by will.

15. *Feeding hogs* was an employment very disagreeable to a Jew.

20. It is usual to kiss the shoulder in embracing.\*

21. We may observe that this penitent son had not finished what he proposed to say, being prevented by the compassion of his father.

22. All these circumstances shew that he was not to be received as *a servant*, which was all that he solicited, but as *a son*; and his cordial reception is given him without the least hint of any satisfaction being made to his offended justice. The return of the penitent was of itself the most pleasing, and a sufficient atonement.

28. This represents the envious, jealous temper of the Scribes and Pharisees; though the character is far from being so bad as theirs. So much joy on the reception of a profligate brother, who had already received and dissipated his share of the inheritance, might justly alarm the elder, as if he was to have been disinherited, or at least deprived of his proper right.

30. He does not, call him *his brother*, but speaking to the father, calls him *his son*. But, in return, the father, speaking to the son, calls him *his brother*, thereby reminding him of his relation to him, and of his obligation to rejoice in every event that was favourable to him.

31. This address does not express displeasure, but is calculated to allay his jealousy, and apprehensions on his own account.

32. He is far from saying that this youngest son would be put upon a level with the elder, who had always remained with him, or that he would even give him the share of his patrimony which he had wasted. He would only be placed

\* See *Harmer*, II. p. 53. (P.)



above the rank of a servant, and would probably be entitled to farther favours as his conduct should deserve.

This parable, therefore, does not authorize penitent sinners to expect that they will ever be treated, strictly speaking, as if they had never offended. Every person will probably be the worse for his sins of every kind as long as he continues to exist, though he will undoubtedly be a gainer by his repentance, and have it in his power to acquire great degrees of virtue and happiness. And this seems to be much more than the Pharisees were disposed to allow. Several of our Saviour's parables and discourses must have been very impertinent, if the Pharisees had supposed that such favour would be shewn to penitents. The *Pharisee* in the Temple probably saw the humility and marks of penitence in the *Publican* who was worshipping along with him; but still entertained a very unfavourable opinion of his state with respect to God, as well as a very high one of his own.

## SECTION LIX.

*The Parables of the unjust Steward, and of the rich Man and Lazarus.*

*Luke* xvi. 1—31.

**LUKE** xvi. 1, 2. Though the parables in this chapter are addressed to the *disciples* of Jesus, they evidently respect the Pharisees, as well as those in the preceding chapter. Among other things, the Pharisees were remarkable for their *covetousness* and *sensuality*. The first parable in this chapter is directed against the former, and the second against the latter of these vices. In the first we are reminded that whatever we enjoy, we are but stewards, who will be required to give an account of every thing that we are entrusted with, and are therefore exhorted to make a wise use of it.

3. He could not *dig*, that is, he could not apply to husbandry. Though by way of excuse he says that he *could not* do it, the inability must be supposed to proceed, not from want of bodily strength, but from disinclination, arising from his having lived a less laborious life.

5. By *debtor* we are probably to understand a *tenant*, and what are here called *debts* were probably *annual rents*, which,

as a steward, empowered to grant leases, he might have some pretence for lessening.

6. The *measure of oil* was probably a *bath*, which was between seven and eight of our gallons.

7. The *measure of wheat* was probably an *homer*, which was between seven and eight of our bushels.

8. *And the Lord commended the unjust steward*; not for his injustice, but for his prudence,\* which may be practised with perfect innocence, and is then a great advantage.

9. That is, make the best use of these deceitful and uncertain riches,† employ them in such a manner in this life, as will be most for your interest in the life to come.

10. Since it is the disposition of mind that leads to justice or injustice, in all cases; if a man be just, honest, or *faithful* in principle, he will be so in small things, as well as in great ones.

12. *What passeth from one to another*,‡ and therefore can hardly be called a *man's own*, and such are all worldly possessions.

19. This parable shewed the Pharisees that they might be as distinguished as possible in this world by all its pleasures and its honours, and yet find themselves wretched hereafter. This shews at the same time how incorrigible many of them were, in not having been reclaimed by the constant reading of *Moses and the prophets*.

21. By *desiring*, is implied his not obtaining his desire. He is represented as quite neglected, his sores not so much as covered.

22. By *Abraham's bosom* we are to understand a seat next to him at an entertainment, as a place of the most distinguished honour.§

It is evident that this parable|| does not represent the soul as a substance distinct from the body, but is formed upon the idea of the whole man being removed into a future

\* "And this unfaithful steward was commended by his master for being so provident." N. T. 1729, l. p. 278. See *Pearce*, l. p. 400; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 69, N. T. Ed. 1, p. 356; *Impr. Vers.* p. 178.

† "Fallacious treasure." N. T. 1729, l. p. 279. See *Mede*, (Dis. xxxiii.,) p. 170; *Gregory*, p. 60; *Le Cene*, p. 577; *Pearce*, l. p. 400; *Wakefield's Notes*, pp. 69, 70, N. T. Ed. 2, l. pp. 357, 358.

‡ *Wakefield. (P.)* See *Pearce*, l. p. 101; *Wakefield's Notes*, pp. 70, 71, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 358.

§ "An allusion to the custom at Jewish feasts, of three lying on a couch, when one man's head lay in another's bosom, as *John* xiii. 25. *Josephus*, in his account of the *Maccabees*, says, (Ch. xiii.,) 'When we die, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will receive us into their bosom.'" *Pearce*, l. p. 403.

|| See *Lightfoot* in *Dodson*, (on *Isaiah* xxxviii. 10,) p. 271; *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 363, 364.



state before the usual time. For when the beggar dies, it is not said that *his soul*, but that *he himself was carried into Abraham's bosom*. It is also the *rich man*, and not *his soul* only, that lifted up his eyes in hell; and the pains he complains of are such as could affect his body only. Also when *Abraham* speaks, *ver. 31*, of *Lazarus* returning to the world, he evidently refers to a real *resurrection*; "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." The general resurrection is never mentioned in any other terms.

25. *Abraham* is represented as using no unnecessary reproaches.\* His calling him *son*, may intimate pity rather than reproach, for not having lived as became his son. Both the characters, are drawn in the extreme, with respect to the difference of their condition, both in respect to this life and the next.

26. The Jews, no doubt, originally supposed that the dead were without sense or feeling; but still they were occasionally *personified*, as the heavens and the earth, and other things without life, frequently are by the ancient prophets. Thus the dead supposed to be in a place under ground, where the bodies were deposited, are represented in this figurative way by *Isaiah*, (xiv. 9,) as if they were still living, and susceptible of joy and sorrow. Thus the Jews and other nations might come to conceive of all the dead as being in some place provided for them under ground, and having a kind of society among themselves. Afterwards, when the souls of men were supposed to be conscious, they were still supposed to be confined in some place within, or under the earth, and the good and bad were supposed to be in separate places. But the idea of a soul's being confined under the earth, would never have occurred to those who conceived it to be an immaterial and ethereal substance, the natural tendency of which would be upwards, and not downwards. But having first considered the dead as being under the ground, without life or soul, and afterwards considered them as having a soul, they would naturally, in that progress of their ideas, consider the souls, or shades, of the dead as being in the same place where the dead had been. It was more than a thousand years before Christians had any idea of the souls of men going to heaven immediately after death; for they were supposed to be in a place under ground, called *hades*, waiting for the resurrection of the

\* "Chrysostom says, Abraham forbears to give hard words to the rich man, calling him son." *Lardner*, V. p. 143.

body; and they were not supposed to go to heaven, so as to be with God and Christ, till then.\*

28. As this rich man makes no mention of his wife, or children, he seems to have been a profligate youth, whose vices had ruined his constitution, and brought him to an untimely end.

31. We are not to infer from this that all men will equally resist all means of conversion. But the evidence of the divine mission of *Moses* being as undeniable to a Jew as any truth could be, those persons who were not influenced by his writings, would find some means or other of evading the force of any other evidence, even that of their own senses.

If, in our Saviour's time, the evidence of a person rising from the dead was not superior to that of the divine mission of *Moses*, much more would such a miracle be insignificant to us, to whom the evidence of a future state is abundantly clearer than it was to the Jews. If we really believe the Gospel history, and the principles of Christianity deduced from it, nothing more can be done to influence our conduct. Even our seeing a man rise from the dead would not weigh any thing more with us.

## PARAPHRASE.

*Luke* xvi. (9.) As this steward, by his behaviour in his stewardship, secured friends against the time when he should be deprived of his office, I advise you to apply your wealth in this world in such a manner, as to secure yourselves friends in another.

(10.) And not the rich only, but even the poorest, may follow the same maxim; for he whose disposition leads him to justice and charity, will be just and charitable, whether he has little or much. If, therefore, you have made a bad use of the things of this world, how can you expect that

\* See Vol. V. p. 221; IX. p. 559. "It is a plain recession from antiquity, which was determined by the Council of Florence, *piorum animas purgatas, &c. mox in cælum recipi, et intueri clarè ipsum Deum trinum et unum sicuti est*: as who please to try, may see it dogmatically resolved to the contrary by *Justin Martyr, Iræneus, Origen, St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, Arethas Cæsariensis, Euthymius*, who may answer for the Greek Church. And for the Latin Church, *Tertullian, St. Ambrose, St. Austin, St. Hilary, Prudentius, Lactantius, Victorinus Martyr*, and *St. Bernard*, are known to be of opinion that the souls of the saints are in *abditis receptaculis, et exterioribus atriis*, where they expect the resurrection of their bodies, and the glorification of their souls; and though they all believe them to be happy, yet they enjoy not the beatific vision before the resurrection." Bishop Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*, Sect. viii. Ed. 2, 1702, pp. 205, 206. See Blackburne's *Hist. View*, Ed. 2, p. 1.



things of more consequence will be entrusted to you? If you have been unfaithful in a trust as stewards, how can you expect to be rewarded by your employer with an estate of your own?

## SECTION LX.

*The Duty of a Servant, the Parable of the unjust Judge, and of the Publican and Pharisee.*

*Luke xvii. 7—10; xviii. 1—14.*

THE three articles of which the Section that I am going to recite consists, may be considered as intended to teach us a proper disposition of mind with respect to God, especially that temper which we should bring before him when we *pray*, viz. the deepest *humility* and *patience*, to wait for whatever he shall bestow upon us.

*Luke xvii. 7, 8.* The connexion of this observation with what precedes it in the same chapter, is not very evident. But what Jesus observes in this place was perhaps intended as a caution to his disciples, not to be puffed up with such extraordinary gifts as they would afterwards be endued with, equivalent to a power of removing mountains; and an admonition that if, with these extraordinary powers, they should do nothing more than what was prescribed to them, they would not have a title to any special favour.

If the point were placed after *επει*, and *εὐθὺς* joined with *ἀναπεσαι*, the meaning would be more clear, and the contrast obvious—"will say unto him, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat *immediately*? And will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten and drunk; and *afterward* thou shalt eat and drink?" \*

10. *Unprofitable servants*,† that is, mean and insignificant, having no claim to any reward, the language of humility.‡ The parable is designed to inculcate humility and submission with respect to God, from whom whatever we receive is from pure goodness.

xviii. 1. This *parable* could not be intended to recom-

\* *Turner. (P.)* "Immediately upon his coming from the field." N. T. 1729, I. p. 282. See *Pearce*, I. p. 405; *Wakefield*, (in loc.) *Impr. Vers.* p. 181.

† "Servants that have done no favour." *Wakefield.* See his *Notes*, p. 73, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 360.

‡ See *Le Cene*, pp. 493, 502; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 230, 234.

mend a teasing importunity, but an humble and patient waiting for the Divine blessing, though it be long delayed; and to shew that, if even bad men will hear reason at length, much more may it be expected that God will condescend to hear a reasonable request.

3. That is, Do me justice.

7. That is, not being unrighteous as the judge, but gracious and merciful, and therefore previously supposed to hear every reasonable petition, as that of this woman was.

*Though he delayeth their cause so long.\**

8. *Shall he find faith?†* That is, faith in this particular promise, concerning his coming to judge either Jerusalem, or the world; the former of which events happened contrary to general expectation, and so probably will the latter too.

9. The former *parable* teaches us *patience*, and this, *humility* in prayer. And humility is the foundation of gratitude, and every other good disposition which can recommend us to God.

10—12. *The Pharisee* in words ascribes all to God, at the same time that he discovers the greatest pride, haughtiness, and contempt of the poor Publican.

This Pharisee seems to have no other reason for thinking well of himself, than because, in his own idea, he was not so bad as those whom he considered as the worst of mankind. And except his fasting, and paying tithes, which the law obliged him to do, all that he boasts of are things of a merely negative nature. He does not so much as pretend to any one positive and active virtue, such as benevolence and generosity. On such weak foundations do many build their hope of the favour of God, crying *peace, peace*, to themselves, as the prophet says, when *there is no peace*.

13. As the proud Pharisee could see nothing but his virtues, so this humble *Publican* can see nothing but his vices. But in both respects God sees what we overlook. Happy will it be for those who, attending chiefly to their imperfections, are continually endeavouring to improve themselves. At the last day, the righteous are represented as disclaiming those virtues, for which they had been the most distinguished, and which their Judge calls to their remembrance.

\* Wakefield. (P.) "Will he delay their cause?" N. T. 1729, I. p. 285.

† See *Le Cene*, pp. 714, 715.



## SECTION LXI.

*Jesus declares that he is the Messiah, at the Feast of Dedication.*

*John x. 22—42.*

**JOHN** is the only evangelist who mentions distinctly, and in their order, all the public festivals at which Jesus attended at Jerusalem, and what he did at those times, especially the discourses which upon these occasions he held with the Jews; and they all relate to the evidence of his divine mission, and indirectly to that of his being the *Messiah*; as if the design of John had been to shew that, if either his *miraculous works*, or his own just *reasoning* from them, would have convinced the Jews of his being sent of God, they would have believed in him, and their calamities would have been prevented.

*John x. 22.* The feast of dedication was in commemoration of the cleansing of the Temple, after the profanation of it by *Antiochus Epiphanes*.<sup>\*</sup> It was celebrated eight days, beginning the twenty-fifth of the Jewish month *Chasleu*, which corresponds to our December. It was likewise, in effect, the æra of their asserting their liberties, after their subjection to the kings of Syria. From this time they were governed by kings of their own, till they were reduced by the Romans.

23. *Solomon's portico* was to the East of the Temple, looking over a deep valley, through which ran the brook *Kedron*, which separated the city from the Mount of Olives. Part of this valley had been filled up to support this portico. Though this work had been probably destroyed, together with the Temple of Solomon, by the Babylonians, yet another being built on the same ground, retained the same name. This portico is also mentioned in *Acts*, [iii. 11; v. 12]. The Temple was well furnished with these *porticos*, or *piazas*, and they were exceedingly convenient for those who attended there, either in the heat of summer, or the rains of winter.†

24. Jesus had indirectly called himself the *Messiah*, but they wished him to do it in so many words; and, no doubt,

<sup>\*</sup> See 1 *Macc.* i. 46, 47; iv. 41—43; *Jos. Antiq. B.* xii. Ch. v. Sect. iv. Ch. vii. Sect. vi. vii.; *Harmer*, I. p. 204; III. pp. xlv. xlv.; *Pearce*, I. p. 534.

† See Wakefield's *Notes*, (on *ver.* 22,) p. 109, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 394.

for some insidious purpose; for when he did avow it, in the most open manner, before the *Sanhedrim*, they were so far from being favourably impressed by it, that, on this very account, they pronounced him to be worthy of death, and accused him to the Roman governor of assuming the character of a king.

25. Not in so many words, but in language fully equivalent, and by such *actions* as were sufficient to ascertain his character.

26, 27. Read the passage thus: *But ye believe not; for ye are not of my sheep. As I said unto you, (vers. 4, 14,) my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.\**

30. Much use has been made of this text to prove that Christ is God, equal to the Father. But there are several senses in which two persons very different in point of rank may be said to be one. Literally speaking, the thing is impossible; for then the *Father* and *Son* would not only be *equal*, but *the very same*, and therefore could not be distinguished by the different titles and offices of *Father* and *Son*. This union of Christ with God, whatever it be, is, as we learn from Christ himself, of the same nature with that which subsists between all his disciples and himself, and between them and God; for in his prayer, *John* xvii. 11, he says, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."† He repeats the same sentiments more fully, *vers.* 22, 23, saying, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

31. That is, *brought* stones, for so the word signifies, there being no loose stones for that purpose either in or near the Temple.

This shews a predetermination to put him to death by stoning.

35. *Unto whom the word of God came.* Pearce would render it, *with whom the judgment of God was,*‡ referring to those persons who, by administering justice, stood, as it were, in the place of God.

37, 38. It appears very clearly by the reply of Jesus, that

\* Turner. (*P.*) Bowyer, p. 54. See Pearce, l. p. 535.

† See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 109, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 594.

‡ *Com.* l. pp. 536, 537. See *Psalms* lxxii., and the remarks of *Le Cene*, p. 512.



the Jews did not accuse him of pretending to be God equal to the Father. He justifies himself upon the principle of other persons being called gods, from their having an office resembling that of God; and to this he, who acted by a more immediate commission from God, had a better title. The evidence of this was his works, which he always ascribed to the Father, and never to himself. Of this we have an example in these very verses: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him." This corresponds to what he says in another place, of *the Father within him doing the works*. This is by no means the language of a person who ascribed any proper divinity to himself. It is directly disclaiming all divinity, and indeed all power above that of any other man, and ascribing it to God only.\*

39. To take him, not to stone him; for which they had no pretence, but to carry him before the *Sanhedrim*, in order to obtain a judicial sentence against him.

41. The inhabitants of this country were the best judges of some part of the evidence of the divine mission of Jesus, as they must have had the most distinct recollection of the testimony of *John the Baptist* in his favour.†

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* x. (28.) I give unto all my sincere followers eternal life, which no one is able to deprive them of. (29.) My Father, who has given me this power, and to whose providence I ascribe all the success of my doctrine, is greater than all, and no one is able to frustrate his designs. (30.) And in this respect I and my Father are to be considered as one and the same, since what I do is by power communicated to me from him.

(31.) Upon this the Jews again took up stones to stone him. (32.) Jesus said unto them, many useful miraculous works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of them is it that you are now about to stone me? (33.) They replied, It is not for any good work that we stone thee, but for a crime no less atrocious than blasphemy; because thou, who art but a man, hast the assurance to arrogate to thyself all the power of God, and therefore in fact makest thyself to be a god. (34.) Jesus answered, If I had used the very

\* See *John* xiv. 10; *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 56, *Note*.

† See *Theol. Repos.* (Mr. J. Palmer), V. pp. 247, 248.

language which you now ascribe to me, it would not be without example in the Scriptures: for do you not read in *Psalm lxxii.* 6, "I have said ye are gods," speaking of magistrates only? (35.) If, then, in the language of the Scriptures, they are called *gods* who only act by commission from God, (and surely the language of the Scriptures is not to be arraigned,) (36,) with what pretence can you say of him who comes into the world with a more immediate and extraordinary commission from God than any prophet before him, thou blasphemest, when all that he says amounts to no more than calling himself *the Son of God*, and claiming such a power as you might expect that a son might receive from a father? (37.) And that I am in this sense the Son of God, I appeal to the works which he has empowered me to do. These prove to demonstration that what I do is by the power of God himself; (38,) and therefore that what I said before is true, viz. that I and he are one, or, in other words, it is as if my Father was in me, and I in him; so intimate is the communication that subsists between us.

## SECTION LXII.

*Concerning Divorces; Children brought to Jesus; his Observations concerning Riches.*

*Matt.* xix. 1—30; *Mark* x. 1—31; *Luke* xvi. 18; xviii. 15—30.

*MATT.* xix. 1, 2. Jesus had retired from Jerusalem because the Jews had made repeated attempts to take his life. However, he seems, after *the Feast of Tabernacles*, not to have returned into *Galilee*, at least not to have spent much time there, and therefore he had retired to the neighbourhood of the river *Jordan*, where we are informed that he had many disciples, in consequence of the people of that country having heard much of the preaching of *John the Baptist*, and being satisfied that what he had foretold concerning Jesus was true.

3. There was great difference of opinion among the Jewish doctors on the subject of *divorces*, some maintaining that nothing but adultery would justify them, but others, and the generality, that they were lawful for any cause or dislike.\* The question was now put to Jesus, probably with

\* See *Pearce*, I. pp. 128, 129; *Wakefield*, p. 264.



a view to bring on him the odium of one or other of these parties.

4\*—6. The books of Moses contain\* the civil law of the Jews, and therefore arguing from them was very proper in this case, even without considering marriage as any thing else than a civil contract.

8. *For the hardness of your hearts*; for the perverseness of your tempers, knowing that without some liberty of divorce, the case of the wife would sometimes be intolerable.

13. In all cases where *imposition of hands* is mentioned, it was only as an action which in those countries accompanied prayer for any particular person.†

15. We see here the affectionate temper of Jesus, in not only praying for these little children, but also *taking them up in his arms*, as *Mark* [x. 16] says, and *putting his hands on them*, when he did it. A person of a very austere character would have contented himself with praying for these children without taking them up in his arms. The action shews an affectionate love of children, and, we may add, a pleasant and amiable temper.

17. This epithet *good* was perhaps indiscriminately applied to those who were masters, or doctors of the law; and Jesus might choose to check that practice. His referring all goodness to God, as the source of it, is of a piece with his disclaiming all extraordinary power as originating with himself, and referring it to God only. Jesus's using this language is the strongest proof not only that he is not God, but that he was sensible of his imperfections as a man: for all created beings must be imperfect.‡

\* See *Gen.* ii. 24; *Wakefield*, pp. 264, 265.

† "It was customary among the Jews for old people to put their hands on the heads of the younger, and implore the kindness of God upon them. After this manner Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. *Gen.* xlviii. 14, 15.

"The propriety of infant baptism is unreasonably inferred from this action of our Saviour by the anonymous author of the *Apostolical Constitutions*, Lib. vi. C. 15. Unreasonably, I say, because our Lord never himself baptized; because there is not the most obscure intimation given of any thing respecting baptism in this passage; and because the New Testament invariably, and without exception, requires all the candidates of this initiatory institution to believe and repent, as essential concomitants of baptism. But infants are incapable of belief, and have no need of repentance, since our Lord exhorts all his disciples to imitate their innocence and simplicity. It is from the Pharisaical principle of tradition, and not from the word of God, that infant baptism must be defended." *Wakefield*, p. 266. Yet see the *analogical* argument from *circumcision* in the paraphrase, *infra*, on *ver.* 14.

‡ Bishop Pearce (*I.* p. 131) qualifies the words of Jesus by the following comment, *at the same time that thou dost not acknowledge me to be God*, as if our Lord had supposed that a Jew could deliberate for a moment whether the Messiah, or any

21, 22. *Sell that thou hast, and give unto the poor.* This our Lord might say for the sake of trying him, and seeing what he was willing to do and suffer for the sake of the gospel. Besides, this was actually done by the primitive Christians, and was necessary in the circumstances in which the Christian church was formed.\*

This command, which *Jesus* had before given to several other persons, and especially to his apostles, might serve to shew this young man that there was something that he valued more than his duty, if he considered *Jesus* as speaking from God. It also shews the dangerous influence of riches in general. By this young man's *going away sorrowful*, it is evident that he had some struggle with himself, which could only have arisen from respecting *Jesus* as a prophet, at least: for otherwise such a command could not have affected him at all. He would have treated it with derision. I would farther observe that this command to sell all, even in this particular case, was not absolute, but proposed as a mark of perfection. *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast.*

[23. *Enter into the kingdom of heaven.* That is, embrace the profession of the gospel. At the establishment and during the first ages of Christianity, while the professors of it were exposed to persecutions, attachment to worldly

inferior divine messenger, were God himself in the disguise of a man. Thus, however, too many *Christians*, inattentive to their Master's most solemn declarations, still glory in describing *Jesus*, the prophet of Nazareth.

"Our Lord here affirms no being whatsoever to deserve the name of good, but God Almighty; and except he speaks with ambiguity and dissimulation, (which it would be unwarrantable and wicked to suppose,) most evidently disclaims the attribute of goodness, of immutable and perfect goodness, as inherent in God alone. Therefore, our Saviour cannot be God; and the notion of, I know not what, a Trinity in Unity, three Gods in one, is here proved, beyond all controversy, by the unequivocal declaration of *Jesus Christ* himself, to be erroneous and impossible.

"And, that this is the just and only reasonable interpretation of the text before us, it cannot be doubted. It suits the plain and obvious construction of the words; nor would any man have thought of devising such an unnatural and constrained explanation, as some have affixed to the passage, without a propensity to a favourite hypothesis; which, like a contagious distemper, infects whatever comes within its reach; or, like a crimson curtain, cast its colour on every surrounding object.

"This passage had not been distorted into a consistency with the *Trinitarian* theory in *Justin Martyr's* days; for he clearly seems to have understood it in the same sense which I have assigned to it. See *Apol. I. Sect. xxi. Ed. Asht.* Nor was *Origen's* idea of it different from mine. 'Ο Σωτηρ ἡμῶν καὶ Κύριος ἀκεκαστος ποτε, Διδασκαλε ἀγαθε, ἀναπεμπων τον λεγοντα τστο επι τον εαυτε Πατερα, φησι' Τι με λεγεις αγαθον; εδεις αγαθος, ει μη εις, ο Θεος ο Πατηρ. *Cont. Cels. Lib. v. p. 258, Ed. Cant.*

"Our Lord and Saviour, when addressed by the title of 'Good Master,' referred the person, who thus entitled him, to his Father, and said, 'Why callest thou me good? There is only one who is good; God the Father.'" *Wakefield*, pp. 268, 269.

\* See *Mede*, (Dis. xxviii.) p. 126; *Pearce*, I. p. 132; *Wakefield*, pp. 269, 270.



riches and honours seems to have been a more insuperable discouragement to the possessors from embracing the faith in Christ, than the fear of imprisonment, tortures and death, was to others. But few were found who had magnanimity enough to resign the riches in which they trusted, either to be distributed to the necessities of their poor brethren, or confiscated by oppressive magistrates. Hence St. Paul observes, 1 Cor. i. 26, "Ye see your calling brethren."\*

*Mark* x. 25.† "This verse in Beza's copy, comes [immediately] after *ver.* 23, which leads naturally to what follows, at *ver.* 24. It is likewise confirmed by *Matt.* xix. 24, and *Luke* xviii. 25.‡

*Matt.* xix. 25. No wonder that they were *amazed*, for riches and power were at that time the great object of the apostles themselves, they expecting that Jesus would be a king, and that they were to be his chief ministers.

27. This shews that the apostles, probably all of them, had been persons of some property; otherwise this boasting would have been quite impertinent; and I have observed before, that there are evident traces of several of them being considerably above the lowest rank of life.§

28. *Ye who have followed me, shall, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man cometh, sit upon twelve thrones, &c.*||

*Mark* x. 30.¶ Dr. Owen and Bishop Pearce\*\* consider the clause *houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions*, as an interpolation, not being reconcilable to the truth of fact.

## PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* xix. (11, 12.) Jesus said unto them, What you propose, in order to avoid the inconveniencies attending the

\* *Turner.* (P.) *Harm.* 1780, p. 159, *Note.*

† Celsus (apud Orig. cont. Cels. Lib. vi. p. 286, Ed. Cant.) charges our Lord with borrowing this sentiment from Plato, and adapting it, with its present variation, to his own purpose. The philosopher says in his fifth book of *Laws*: *Αγαθον οντα διαφεροντως, και πλησιον ειναι διαφεροντως, αδυνατον.*—It is impossible for a man to be very good and very rich at the same time." *Wakefield*, p. 270.

‡ "Easier for a cable," for *καμηλος* reading *καμιλος*. See *Bowyer* (on *Matt.* xix. 24), p. 11; and a different sense in *Harmer*, III. pp. 89, 90. See *Wakefield* (on *Matt.* xix. 24), p. 270.

§ *Markland.* (P.) See *Bowyer*, p. 24.

§ See *supra*, p. 67.

¶ Dr. Owen in *Bowyer.* (P.) See *Lindsey's Sequel*, pp. 77, 78; *Pearce*, I. p. 133; *Wakefield*, pp. 270—272.

¶ Beza, after *Theophylact*, proposes the following punctuation: "Shall receive an hundred fold; now in this time houses, &c., and in the world to come, eternal life." *Bowyer*, p. 25. See *Doddridge*, Sect. cxxxvii. *Note* (1).

\*\* *Com.* I. pp. 257, 258.

married state, when there happens not to be a thorough good liking between the parties, viz. not to marry at all, is more than can be expected of all persons, though it is so with respect to some. For some have little or no inclination to marriage, and therefore may be said, in a figurative sense, to be eunuchs from their mother's womb, as others are actually eunuchs by the wanton cruelty of men; while others, like myself, will devote themselves to a single life, in order to be free from worldly incumbrances, and to devote themselves more entirely to the service of religion; which, though not generally adviseable, may be expedient in time of persecution. In this case, let every person act as he shall find himself able to do, and as he shall judge to be best upon the whole.

(14.) *Luke* xviii. (17.) Do not forbid affectionate parents to bring their children to me, for such will be qualified by baptism to become members of my visible church, as your children are now members of the Jewish church by circumcision.\* And besides, of persons whose tempers, in many respects, resemble that of a child, the subjects of my kingdom must entirely consist. For whosoever does not receive my instructions with an humble and teachable temper, free from prejudices and worldly views, which is characteristic of a child, cannot possibly receive it to good purpose.

(17.) Jesus said unto him, By your manner of address you seem to consider me as being *of myself* superior to others in goodness; whereas, every thing good is derived from God; so that, strictly speaking, he only is good; because he alone is so of himself, originally, absolutely, and in the highest degree.

(26.) Jesus replied, Considering, indeed, the very powerful temptations to which rich men are exposed, it may well appear impossible for them to resist their fatal influence; but notwithstanding this, such is the power of the motives to virtue suggested in the gospel, which God has sent me to preach, that even this temptation will not be found too strong; for numbers will abandon every thing for the sake of the gospel, and of a good conscience.

(30.) Many who are *first* with respect to advantages, like the Jews, will be the *last* to improve them; and many who are last, as the Gentiles, will distinguish themselves by an early and zealous attachment to the gospel.

\* See Vol. II. pp. 333, 334; Vol. V. p. 271.



## SECTION LXIII.

*The Parable of the Householder who hired Labourers.**Matt. xx. 1—16.*

THE parable with which this chapter opens is a confirmation of what Jesus advanced at the close of the last, viz. *the first shall be last, and the last first.*

1. By this parable our Lord reproves the Jews, who should be offended at the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church.

2. *A denarius.* This was the usual price of a day's labour in times of antiquity.\* It was eight-pence of our money.

3. This *third hour* of the day was about nine in the morning with us.†

16.‡ Many shall be invited to partake of the blessings of the gospel, but few, in comparison of what might have been expected, will be found worthy of them. By this he might mean the apostles and other early disciples, who because they were the first to embrace Christianity, might on that ground think they had a just claim to be particularly distinguished by Christ. They had boasted that they had left all to follow him. And he might intend to apprise them that this circumstance alone would not avail them, since Christians in a later period might have on the whole even more merit than they.

This may be an allusion to the method of raising recruits in time of war, when all that were capable of bearing arms were *called* to appear, though but few of them were *selected* for the army.

Pearce§ thinks the words, “Many be called but few chosen,” an interpolation in this place, having been borrowed from *Chap. xxii. 14*, where they are very proper.

The obvious meaning of this parable is, that we have no right to complain if we receive at the hands of God what by his promise we are entitled to, (for we have no other title to

\* See *Tobit v. 14*; *Pearce*, I. p. 135.

† See *ibid.*; *Wakefield*, p. 276.

‡ “That is, the *Gentiles*, who came in *last*, shall be the first partakers of Christ's kingdom: the *Jews*, who were *first* in covenant, and had wrought so long before us in God's vineyard, shall be the *last* in the covenant of Christ, and not converted till the fulness of the *Gentiles* be come in.” *Mede* (Dis. xxiii.), p. 86. See another explanation of the parable, by *Gregory I.* in *Lardner*, V. p. 303.

§ *Com. I.* pp. 136, 137. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 15, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 304.

any thing,) though to appearance, others receive more than in that proportion. For though in general all men will receive hereafter according to their works, and no person will receive *less* than he can reasonably expect, others may receive in a much greater proportion. For this is analogous to the methods of Divine Providence in this world, and we have no reason to suppose that the divine proceedings in another will be regulated differently. We may think that the conduct of Providence will not be *mysterious* hereafter: but in this we may be mistaken, though in a future world we shall certainly know more than we do in this. Still God, and his works, and providence, will always be incomprehensible to finite minds.

Strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as partiality in the Divine proceedings. When God distinguishes one person more than another, we have reason to think that it is never *on his own account*, but always on that of *others*; it being conducive to the good of the whole that there should be such distinctions. In this, therefore, there is no proper *partiality* to any person. God is the common parent of us all, and stands in an equal relation to us all.\*

This parable is far from giving any encouragement to a late repentance: for those who were hired at the eleventh hour had been waiting all the day, but nobody hired them; so that they could not have done more than they did, in shewing their readiness to be hired, and to labour. Besides, one hour's work did remain, which cannot be said to be the case of a proper death-bed repentance, when all opportunity and capacity for labour is over.

## SECTION LXIV.

### *The Resurrection of Lazarus.*

*John xi. 1—57.*

**JOHN xi. 1.** The family of *Lazarus*, consisting of his sisters *Martha* and *Mary*, besides Lazarus himself, was one to which Jesus seems to have been particularly attached, no doubt on account of the excellence of their characters.

\* "It has been thought by some, that the discontented *labourers*, who came first into the *vineyard*, were designed to represent the *Jews*, who could not behold with temper the *Gentiles*, so lately received into God's favour, admitted to equal privileges in the gospel with themselves.

"This appears to me an excellent interpretation, and I can think of no objection to it, but the following:—It must be acknowledged, and is very evident, that *Luke* has accommodated his gospel, more than any other evangelist, to the circumstances



From several circumstances this family seems to have been of some consideration. At this house an entertainment was made for Jesus and his friends, when Martha was busied in making preparations for it, while Mary attended to the discourses of Jesus.\* At another time this Mary anointed the head of Jesus with a box of ointment,† of so great value, as appeared exceedingly extravagant to Judas, and others who were present. When Lazarus died, he was buried as a person of some distinction, not in a common grave, but in a cave dug out of a rock. After the burial, many of the Jews from Jerusalem were on a visit to the family, to comfort them, some of whom seem to have had connexions with the chief priests; and such also were present at the entertainment, when the box of ointment was used.

2. Of this the evangelist gives an account in the next chapter.

3. Thinking, no doubt, that he would hasten to his relief.

4. That is, Would not finally issue in death, but in his resurrection.‡

9, § 10. || By *day*. Jesus might here mean that day, or season, in which he was *to work the works of him that sent him*. When that should be expired, but not before, he was to fall a sacrifice to the malice of his enemies.

16. That is, If he will expose himself in this imprudent manner, still we must not desert him. Let us run the same risk, though we die along with him.¶

22. That is, Hoping he would raise him from the dead, but not presuming to ask so great a favour.\*\*

It is evident that the Jews in general, as well as the learned Pharisees, had a firm belief in the doctrine of a *resurrection*, which they did not learn from Jesus. We find traces of it in the times of the *Maccabees*, long before our Saviour; and it is the belief of all the Jews to this day.

of the *Gentiles*; and takes every occasion of asserting their *equality* to the *Jews*, and their *equal* share in the regards of Heaven. How then came he to take no notice of a *parable*, which, in this supposed interpretation, was calculated, more than any other, to ascertain that important point?" Wakefield, p. 278.

\* See Luke x. 41, 42, *supra*, pp. 237, 238.

† See John xii. 3, *Sect. lxvii. infra*.

‡ See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 110, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 395.

§ "The visible part of the *Jewish* day was, in strictness, from sun-rising to sun-setting. That they divided into twelve hours. These hours were longer or shorter, proportionably, as the sun was nearer to, or farther from, the tropic of *Cancer*; and the 6th hour ended always precisely at noon." Wotton, II. p. 9.

|| "In it, that is, in the world." Harm. 1780, p. 163. See *Le Cene*, pp. 646, 647; Hallett, I. pp. 13, 14; Pearce, I. p. 539.

¶ See ver. 8, Wakefield (*in loc.*), his *Notes*, p. 110, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 395.

\*\* See Le Clerc's *Harmony*, 1701, (*Diss. ii. Canon vi. ad fin.*) p. 588.

As it is highly improbable that a doctrine of so extraordinary a nature as this should ever have occurred to the mind of any man, and much less have been so firmly believed by a whole nation, we cannot help concluding that it had its origin in some revelation from God, though the record of it is now lost. It was probably prior to the time of *Moses*, and may have been as old as *Adam*, or, at least, as *Enoch*, whose being translated without dying would impress the minds of men with the persuasion of the reality of a future life, and a life, it must be observed, not of *the soul*, but of *the body*, or of *the man*. Such also would be the natural inference from the subsequent translation of *Elijah*. Also, when Samuel appeared to Saul, it was not the soul of Samuel, but Samuel himself, rising from his grave, under ground.\*

From these considerations it may appear possible that David might refer to a future life in some of those passages in the Psalms in which we should not otherwise have expected such a reference.†

If so important a revelation as this had been made to Moses, or at any time posterior to him, we should certainly have known *when*, and *by whom*, it was communicated. It must, however, be acknowledged to be something extraordinary, that we should find so little on this subject in *the Old Testament*. The minds of the best of the Jews were but carnal; and in the *Messiah* himself they expected nothing but a temporal prince, the virtuous as well as the vicious among them.

[23. It is very observable that no topic of consolation either occurs to Martha, or is suggested by Jesus, from the opinion of an intermediate state, in which the soul should enjoy a state of happiness separate from the body. It is evident that Martha had no hope concerning her brother, but at the resurrection of the last day.]‡

24. 25. *The resurrection at the last day* is the object which Martha brings into view; our Lord's reply is relative to the same object—I am he who shall raise the dead, and bestow life upon them at that day—then, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and every one who is living (πας ὁ ζων) and believeth in me, shall never die. This is just the same doctrine as that which St. Paul lays down, 1 Cor. xv. 51: "Behold, I shew you a mystery;" or

\* See 1 Sam. xxviii. 8—19, Vol. XI. pp. 386, 387. "Le célèbre Maimonide regarde tout ce qui se passa dans cette occasion, comme une fourbe de la Pythonesse." *Traité sur les Miracles*, par J. Serces, 1729, pp. 205, 206.

† See Vol. XII. pp. 487—492.

‡ Harm. 1780, p. 163.



a doctrine newly promulgated by the gospel; "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Jesus adds [*ver. 26*], "Believest thou this?" Martha, as though surprised with a sudden view of the grand object presented before her, which she could but imperfectly comprehend, replies only in general terms: "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world"—consequently—that all thy declarations are true, and thy promises faithful.\*

26. That is, They who shall be dead at the second coming of Christ shall rise again, and they who shall be living at that time will be changed, and made incorruptible and immortal without dying. This promise of our Saviour, however, is only made to believers, or good men.† That the wicked will be made immortal in a future state, we are not told.‡

35. Jesus probably *wept* from mere sympathy, with the grief of all about him, which is an argument of the amiable sensibility of his mind.

38. The Jews of better fashion generally disposed of their dead in caves, scooped out of the natural rock, where, after they were bound up with spices in linen cloths, they were shut up with stones.§

41, 42. This implies, if not a particular prayer for divine assistance every time that he worked any miracle, at least an habitual confidence in the Divine aid, which is equivalent to it. It equally implies that he worked his miracles not by any power properly *inherent in himself*, though originally derived from God, but by a power foreign to himself; agreeing with what he says, that *the Father within him did the works*. Now though there be a sense in which it may be truly said that *God works all our works in us and for us*, since we derive all our powers from him, yet if any of us should say, when we only walk or speak, or perform any other natural action, that it was not *ourselves* that did it, but *God*, the language would be very improper, and reprehensible, implying more than was really true. It is evident, therefore, from the whole tenor of the language and conduct of Jesus, that the power by which he worked his miracles was no more *his own* than the power by which Moses or the apostles worked miracles was theirs, though the exertion of

\* Turner. (P.)

† See Hallett (on *vers. 25, 26*), III. pp. 34, 35.

‡ See the Author's later thoughts, Vol. II. p. 64; Vol. XII. p. 504.

§ Shaw's Travels, p. 265. (P.)

that power in some cases seems to have been voluntary, or to have depended upon his will, which was not the case with any other prophet.

44. The greater quantity of spices there was used in the Jewish interments, "the greater honour was thought to be done to the dead."\*

This was the third miracle of this stupendous nature, and the evidence of it is more indisputable than that of either of the preceding, many of the enemies of Jesus being present, and particularly attentive to his conduct.

46. This is not the only occasion on which the Jews resisted the evidence of the most undeniable miracles. But they wanted more miracles, and of a different kind, to convince them that he was *the Messiah*.

49. It is conjectured that John wrote ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἰδατε οὐδὲ λογίζεσθε; *Do ye not know and consider?* †

### PARAPHRASE.

*John xi. (9.)* I am under no apprehension of what you fear from the Jews. As men travel in safety in the light of the sun, and stumble only when they walk in the night, so I, who am guided by a light superior to that of the sun, while I am about my Father's business, am under his constant protection, and therefore am without any fear for my personal safety.

(16.) Then said Thomas to his fellow-disciples, Since he is determined to go, though at the apparent hazard of being killed by the Jews, let us by all means accompany him, and share his fate, though it should be death itself.

(25.) Jesus said unto her, It is by me that the general resurrection shall be accomplished, and a new and better life introduced. At the last day all my deceased followers shall rise: and those of them who shall be alive at the last day shall not die at all, but undergo such a change as that their bodies may be similar to those that rise again; and, from being corruptible, shall become incorruptible and immortal.

(27.) She replied, I have no doubt of what thou sayest, for I firmly believe that thou art the promised Messiah.

(50.) Caiaphas said, It is certainly better for us to destroy this one man at once, than run the risk of bringing the whole vengeance and power of the Romans upon us, in order to crush the seditions that will be excited by him, which might

\* Harmer, II. p. 163. (P.) See *Jos. Antiq. B. xv. Ch. iii. Sect. iv.*

† See Pearce, I. p. 543. (P.) On vers. 49—51, see *Theol. Repos. III. p. 187; Lardner, I. p. 389.*



be the utter ruin of the whole nation. (51.) Now Caiaphas, being the high-priest that year, his words may be considered as prophetic, and in a much more important sense than he had any idea of: for, in fact, Jesus did die for the whole nation, and not for that nation only, but for the benefit of the whole world, who by becoming Christians are united under one head, and brought to join in the worship of the one living and true God.

## SECTION LXV.

*Jesus, on his Way to Jerusalem, foretells his Sufferings, cures two blind Men, and is entertained by Zaccheus.*

*Matt. xx. 17—34; Mark x. 32—52; Luke xviii. 31—43; xix. 1—10.*

WE are now drawing near to the most interesting part of the history of Jesus, viz. the transactions of the last Passover, at which he was crucified. Of these, as might be expected, we have a more distinct account than of any of the preceding transactions of his life, and we shall find his mind properly affected with the clear knowledge that he had of his approaching sufferings. From this time all his discourses to his disciples had a view to them, and to their situation in consequence of them: for, excepting during the agony in the garden, he seems to have felt more for them than for himself.

*Matt. xx. 19.\** There was something very improbable, at the time, in this prophecy of Jesus, concerning the manner of his death. The greatest probability was, that if he had been to die a violent death, it would have been in the Jewish manner, by *stoning*, as a *blasphemer*, especially if, as was several times attempted, it had been done in a sudden tumult. But it was in the councils of God that he should be put to death in the most open and public manner, probably that, being long exposed to the view of all persons, there might be the more witnesses of the reality of his death; and this was most effectually done by the Roman method of public *crucifixion*.

20. The two sons of *Zebedee*, James and John, had always been particularly distinguished by Jesus, but not more than Peter; those three only having been with Jesus when he

\* *He will return to life.* See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 15, N.T. Ed. 2, I. p. 304.

raised the daughter of *Jairus*, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and afterwards in the garden of *Gethsemane*. They might think that, being two of the same family, they would stand higher in the esteem of their Master on that account, though the same was the case of Peter and Andrew.\* It is plain, however, that these sons of Zebedee did not conclude, from what Jesus had said of Peter *having the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, that any particular prerogative was intended by it; for then they would have considered the dignity for which they petitioned as already promised to another.

21. This is said to allude to the two most honourable places in the Jewish *Sanhedrim*, viz. on the right hand † and on the left of the president.

It seems extraordinary that, immediately after Jesus had spoken so very expressly of his *death*, and the manner of it, a request of this kind should be made to him. But the apostles were so fully persuaded that their Master was to be *a king*, invested with supreme power, especially as he had just before spoken of the twelve apostles as to sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, that they concluded he spake figuratively; and the nearer he was to those trials which they supposed to be signified by his *death*, the nearer they would naturally imagine he was to that *kingdom* which was to follow those trials.

22. The word βαπτίζω often signifies to overwhelm with calamity. Thus *Josephus*, speaking of a gang of robbers who forced their way into Jerusalem, says, εβαπτισαν την πολιν, *they baptized the city.* ‡

23. § *James* was the first of the apostles who suffered any

\* "Grotius observes, that *James* and *John* had probably informed their mother of the honour, reserved for them, to sit upon thrones, judging the tribes of Israel (xix. 28). And their admission to a view of our Lord's transfiguration, to the exclusion of all the other disciples, except *Peter*, might have contributed to fill them with unreasonable ideas of their own consequence, and estimation with their Master.—And yet the suppliant manner in which *Salome* addressed *Jesus*, and the deliberation with which she proposed her request, prove her to have been conscious of asking a very extraordinary favour." Wakefield, pp. 280, 281.

† See 1 Kings ii. 19; Wakefield, pp. 271, 281.

‡ See *Pearce*, I. p. 138. "The word βαπτίζω is the more proper in this place, as it is used metaphorically by Greek authors for being immersed in trouble or distress.—The same figure is common in Latin authors:

----- MENSOR fortunæ fluctibus.

Catull. lxviii. 13.

----- adversus rerum IMMERSABILIS undis.

Hor. Ep. I. 2.

and so indeed שׁוּבַע is used in the O. T. See *Ps.* lxix. 2." Wakefield, p. 281.

§ See *Le Cene*, pp. 524—527; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 241—243; *Pearce*, I. p. 138.

"The old version perverts the meaning of the passage. Our Saviour does not design to say, that he cannot dispose of the honourable posts in his kingdom. This



considerable hardship, being put to death by Herod. *John* outlived all the apostles; but his sufferings might not be the less, but perhaps the more, on that account, though he might die, as is supposed, a natural death.

27. This was very pertinently observed, in order to give the apostles just ideas of the nature of that honour, which himself and his most distinguished followers would obtain. It would consist not in personal gratification, but in having a sphere of greater usefulness, which is properly expressed [*Mark* x. 44] by being *servant of all*; and indeed such is the nature of all lawful and desirable advancement. They are stations of public usefulness, in which men give their time, and employ their talents, for the good of others; and what is that but being *servants*? Such, in fact, are kings, and all magistrates; officers who receive salaries for public services; but being services for which all persons are not qualified, the idea of greater dignity and honour is necessarily and properly annexed to them.

28. *Give his life a ransom for many.\** That is, Shall *deliver*, or *rescue*, many, viz. from sin and misery, by means of his gospel, which was signally confirmed by his death and resurrection. Thus God is said to *redeem*, or *ransom*, the Israelites from Egypt, by an exertion of his power, not by giving a price for them.†

29. This transaction, which is placed by *Matthew* after the departure of Jesus from *Jericho*, is related by *Mark* [x. 46] and *Luke* [xviii. 35] as happening at his approach to it. The difference is inconsiderable; and *Matthew*, who was present, is certainly the most worthy of credit.‡

31. The persuasion that Jesus was the *Messiah* was probably by this time become general among the Jews, as we see by the impatience of the multitude to make him a king on his entering into Jerusalem, and *Son of David* was synonymous to *Messiah*.

34. This is the last miracle that we have any account of Jesus performing, except that relating to the barren fig-tree,

could not be his meaning. He was invested, at his *ascension*, with *all power both in heaven and in earth*, and was made the *legislator* of religion to all mankind. But he acted in all things under *subordination* to the will of God, and would only dispense his honours to those, whom his God and Father had *ordained* to receive them. *Jesus Christ* is the *medium* through which the streams of the perennial fountain of Divine love are showered down on the human race." *Wakefield*, p. 281.

\* See *Pearce*, l. p. 139; *Wakefield*, pp. 282—284; *Wakefield's Notes*, pp. 15, 16, N.T. Ed. 2, l. pp. 304, 305.

† See *Exod.* vi. 6, xv. 13; *Deut.* vii. 8; *1 Chron.* xvii. 21; *Mark* x. 45; *Turner in Theol. Repos.* l. pp. 206—211.

‡ See *Le Clerc's Harm.* (Diss. ii. Can. vii.) p. 589.

and that of his healing the ear of the high-priest's servant which had been cut off by Peter, and it was of the same benevolent nature with the generality of his miracles. It is not only said that he restored these persons to their sight, but that he *had compassion upon them*, and *touched their eyes*, which are indications of a sympathizing and feeling heart.

*Luke* xix. 1. This was on Jesus's last journey to Jerusalem.

4. *Sycamore trees* are still very common in Palestine.

7. They conclude that he was *a sinner*, or a man of no principle, merely because he was *a publican*.\*

8. In answer to these Jews, *Zaccheus* makes this declaration concerning his general principles and conduct, shewing that he was not the man that, from his profession, they took him to be; for we are not to suppose that *Zaccheus* was here only professing what he would do *hereafter*, and therefore imagine that this is an argument for the possibility of *sudden conversions*. Characters, and habits which form characters, are not so soon changed.

The Jews, on the voluntary acknowledgment of a fraud, were only obliged to add *a fifth part*. [*Lev.* vi. 5.] They were to restore *fourfold* when they had made no discovery, but were convicted of the injustice.†

9. *Jesus said unto him*. This may perhaps be rendered *concerning him*.‡

From Jesus saying that *salvation* was *come* to *Zaccheus this day*, it is probable that the disciples concluded he would very soon assume his kingly character, as we shall presently find.

By *a son of Abraham*, Jesus does not mean a mere descendant of Abraham, but a worthy son of his; a proper member of the Messiah's kingdom, one who is entitled to the privileges of it. That *Zaccheus* was a Jew, his name evinces. Had he been a Gentile, it is probable that the Jews would have made still more objection to Jesus being entertained by him.

\* See on *Matt.* v. 46, *Pearce*, I. p. 37; *Wakefield*, p. 87.

† "Some commentators (with *Salmasius de Fœn*, p. 242,) have remarked, that oppressive publicans were by the Roman law required to *restore fourfold*. But this was only after judgment obtained, where they had been guilty of extorting by force; whereas before conviction it was enough to make restitution of what had been taken; and even after it, in common cases, all that the law required was restoring twice as much." *Doddridge*, Sect. cxliii. Note (f).

‡ See *Macknight*. (P.) "Then said Jesus, speaking of him." *N. T.* 1729, I. p. 290. "Probably *Luke* wrote *αυτου*, not *αυτου*; for Jesus was not then speaking to him." *Pearce*, I. p. 415.



## SECTION LXVI.

*The Parable of the Ten Pounds, and Jesus's Lamentation over Jerusalem.**Luke* xix. 11—28, 41—44.

In the preceding part of this chapter Jesus had said, when he was entertained at the house of Zaccheus, *this day is salvation come to this house*. From this circumstance probably, and also from his having said a little time before, that his twelve apostles would “sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,”\* they would naturally enough, considering the idea they had of their Master and his kingdom, be led to expect that he would soon assume kingly power, perhaps at the approaching Passover, to confound all his enemies, and aggrandize his friends. It was with a view to this state of the minds of his disciples that Jesus delivered these parables.

*Luke* xix. 11. We shall also find that, on this last visit to Jerusalem, Jesus took every opportunity of delivering the most solemn and awful warnings to the Jews, and foretelling, both in parables and without a parable, the judgments that would befall them in consequence of their unbelief. This *parable* is one of them, though it might likewise be intended to signify to his disciples, who expected the immediate display of his royal dignity and their own approaching distinction and happiness, that the blessings of his kingdom were not to be obtained so easily, but only in consequence of a careful improvement of the talents with which they were entrusted.†

12. *To receive for himself a kingdom*. This is an allusion to the practice of the kings of *Judca*, and of the neighbouring countries, to go to *Rome* to obtain from the emperors the confirmation of their right to the throne, and to engage their protection.‡

13. § Each of these *pounds* was seven or eight of our money.

15. If by Jesus *going away*, and then *receiving his kingdom*, we are to understand his going to his Father, and then his returning with power and great glory to raise the dead,

\* See *Matt.* xix. 28; *Luke* xxii. 30; *supra*, p. 260.

† See *Matt.* xxv. 14—30; *Pearce*, I. p. 416.

§ “Rather *traffic*, or *trade*, till I come.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

and to give to every man according to his works, we may learn from this parable, that the happiness of heaven is not a state of mere enjoyment, without farther exercise or discipline, but a state of great exertion, like that of the government of a city, or a province. We shall then have more important, but more honourable work to do, and therefore may be said to be in a state of discipline and improvement, as long as we continue to exist. So that it is only in a popular and general sense that our state of trial is said to terminate with the present life; the station we immediately enter upon in the next depending upon it.

23. Thus, without any exertion of his own, the money that had been intrusted with him would have received *some* increase; and as he knew the severity of his master, he had no excuse for not doing this. We see in this instance what miserable excuses men are ready to make for their neglect of duty. They are first governed by their passions, or by their indolence, and let them be ever so much to blame, they will always, like *Adam* and *Eve* in Paradise, find something to plead in their own excuse. This we see to be the case with the most abandoned of men. By some means or other they often succeed in pacifying their own minds, and as the prophet says, *cry peace, peace to themselves, when there is no peace*. What we see to be the case with others, we should always suspect concerning ourselves. The same bias in our own favour, will always dictate the same idle excuses, which being common to all men, will avail us nothing at the last day.

26. They who have shewn the greatest capacity, and the best disposition to improve what has been committed to them, are the most proper persons to receive more. But it is still as a farther *trust*, which they are to improve, and not merely as a reward for past services; an opportunity of still greater exertion, and a sphere of higher duty; as no doubt will be what is called the happiness of a heavenly state.

27. By *servants* we are to understand the professed disciples of Christ, and by his *enemies*, those who openly reject him, as the Jews of that generation.

41, 42.\* This circumstance shews in a most striking light the sensibility of the mind of Jesus, his feeling and affectionate disposition. He was not content with for-

\* "After peace. *It had been well*. This clause should have been added, as the like is added in the like case by the translators, Chap. xiii. 9." *Hallett*, I. p. 13. See *Maldonat* in *Bowyer*, p. 43. "Rather, *O that thou hadst known; it is a wish*." *Pearce*, I. p. 419.



warning his countrymen of their certain ruin, if they should continue in their course of disobedience to God and his prophets, but he was moved even to shed tears\* on the view of the approaching miseries of his enemies. So far was he from indulging a spirit of revenge, that he expresses the strongest regret that they had not been more wise for themselves, and that his good will to them could avail them nothing.

43, 44. At the time that this prophecy was delivered, it was no more probable that the city of Jerusalem would be subject to these dreadful calamities which Jesus here predicts, than any other city in the Roman empire. Yet he not only foretells the certain destruction of it, but the very manner in which it would be accomplished, their enemies *casting a trench about it, and compassing it on every side*, to prevent all ingress or egress, which was actually effected by a wall of circumvallation, in the course of the siege, by *Titus*.†

The phrase *to know*, frequently signifies to regard, to pay proper attention to.

## SECTION LXVII.

*Jesus sups at Bethany, and makes a triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.*

*Matt.* xxvi. 6—13; *xxi.* 1—11; *Mark* xiv. 1—9; *xi.* 1—10; *Luke* xix. 29—40; *John* xii. 1—19.

As we are come nearer to the last scenes of the life of Jesus, his history becomes much more interesting than before, and we are now within a few days of his death, when he was at Jerusalem for the last time. About this time, for the reasons that have been given, and especially on the account of the recent raising of *Lazarus* from the dead, in so public a manner, and so near to Jerusalem, the expectations of the common people were raised to the highest pitch; and the first reception of Jesus by the populace, who did not enter into the views of their superiors the Scribes and Pharisees, corresponded to these high expectations.

\* It appears that in the time of *Epiphanius*, this passage was expunged from *Luke's* Gospel, by some Christians, as derogatory to the dignity of Jesus. See *Le Cene*, p. 772.

† See *Josephus*, (War,) B. v. Ch. vi. Sect. ii. iv.; Ch. xii. Sect. ii.; B. vi. Ch. viii. Sect. iv.; *Pearce*, I. pp. 419, 420.

*John* xii. 1. This was on the Sabbath-day, when it was customary with the Jews to make entertainments.

2. By *Martha's* serving, it should seem that this entertainment was at her own house, or at least that it was made at her expense, it being usual for the master or mistress of the house to wait upon the guests; as *Abraham* and *Sarah* are said to have done, when they entertained the angels without knowing them to be such. But *Matthew* [xxvi. 6] and *Mark* [xiv. 3] say that this entertainment was at *the house of Simon the leper*, probably one who had been a leper, but was cured by Jesus.

*Mark* xiv. 3. *Breaking* means nothing more than *opening it*, or only *shaking it*,\* to mix the parts well together. That she did not pour the whole contents on our Lord's head, is evident from her reserving a part for his feet.† This *ointment* is said to have been contained in *an alabaster*‡ *box*, by which was meant a vessel without a handle, such as was used for holding small quantities of very valuable things. [*John* xii. 3.] It was great respect to anoint the head with ointment of such value, but to anoint the feet with it was a mark of the greatest possible respect and veneration. These sentiments would, no doubt, be much heightened in the mind of *Mary*, by Jesus having so lately raised from the dead her brother *Lazarus*, who was present at the entertainment.

*John* xii. 5. The sum here mentioned is nearly ten pounds of our money.

6. *Bare that which was therein.* Εἰσάρασαν, which may be rendered *carried off*, or *stole* what was in it.§

*Matt.* xxvi. 12. Not that she had any view to his death; but Jesus himself, knowing how soon he was to die, chose in this manner to allude to it, (though it was impossible for any of his audience to understand him at the time,) which I have more than once observed to have been his custom on other occasions. His meaning seems to have been, that this ointment which *Mary* might be supposed to have prepared

\* "Le verbe συντριβω ne signifie pas proprement rompre ou briser, mais seulement remuer ou agiter." *Le Cene*, p. 636. See Blackwall's *Sacred Classics*, 1731, I. p. 166; Wakefield, in *Theol. Repos.* IV. pp. 231, 282; Pearce, I. p. 276.

† See *ibid.*

‡ *Alabaster* was "a species of marble" of which boxes were so commonly made for "containing sweet ointments," that they retained the same name when they were made "of gold, silver, glass, or wood." Pearce, (on *Matt.* xxvi. 7,) I. p. 179. (P.) See *supra*, p. 145; Wakefield, p. 364.

§ *Toup* in Pearce, I. pp. 546, 547. See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 111, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 396.



for his dead body,\* was applied to him while he was alive, and only near to his death.

*John* xii. 9. There was probably a great crowd about the house, as well as a considerable number of guests. It was, indeed, sufficient to excite curiosity, to see at the same time a man who had been *raised from the dead*, and him who had raised him.

10. Nothing perhaps can shew the incorrigible prejudice and malice of the Jewish rulers in a stronger light than their attempting to *put Lazarus to death*, as well as Jesus. Indeed, their folly was as great as their malice; for believing, as they did, the power of Jesus to raise a man from the dead, what could they expect but to afford him another opportunity of triumphing over them? But extreme malice often makes men blind to the most obvious consequences of things, and, as we say, infatuated.

11. By *believing on Jesus* must here be understood believing him to be the *Messiah*, as appeared when he entered the city.

12. This was *Sunday*, from the following circumstances afterwards called *Palm-Sunday*.

*Matt.* xxi. 2. This exact knowledge of things at a distance, with respect to time and place, which Jesus shewed upon this occasion, and likewise afterwards, with respect to the person with whom he intended to eat the Passover, was well calculated to satisfy his disciples, when they came to reflect upon it, that nothing could befall him but what he foresaw, and was prepared for.

The Jews were not allowed to use horses; for in the East they are chiefly articles of luxury, being only used for pomp, and for war, and never as beasts of burden, or draught. The *ass* also is a much finer animal in the East than it is in this part of the world. We read of judges and princes riding upon them. When Solomon was crowned, and made a solemn entry into Jerusalem, he was seated on an ass.

45.† The passage alluded to is *Zech.* ix. 9, which *Grotius*

\* "The woman is said to have done this, (though she meant it not,) because what she did was emblematical of it." *Pearce*, I. p. 180. See *Wakefield*, p. 364.

† "Even a colt," &c. *N. T.* 1729, I. p. 78. See *Mark* xi. 4; *Luke* xix. 33; *John* xii. 14; *Bowyer*, p. 12.

"This prophecy from *Zech.* ix. 9, does not entirely agree, either with the original Hebrew, or with the version of the LXX.; and appears to have been quoted by the evangelist from memory.

"*Luke* records this transaction full as circumstantially as *Matthew*, (xix. 29—36,) but takes no notice at all of this prediction of Zechariah, because the argument

says is allowed by some Jewish Rabbies to relate to the *Messiah*.

*Mark xi. 10. That cometh in the name of the Lord.* These words are not found in several MSS. *Pearce* thinks them to be an interpolation.\* He that cometh (ὁ ἐρχομεν) seems to have been an appellative of the *Messiah*. Thus when John sent to inquire if Jesus was the *Messiah*, he bid his disciples to say, *Art thou he that should come?*

It is evident from these acclamations, that the generality of the common people considered Jesus as the *Messiah*, who they thought was to be a descendant of David, or, in their phraseology, *a Son of David*.

*John xii. 19.* From this time the rage of the *Pharisees* was raised to the highest pitch. Jesus had kept no measures with them, and now he took no measure to guard himself against them. It was evident, therefore, that there must be an end of his authority, or theirs. Can we wonder, then, at the desperate part they took, or at the violence and infatuation with which they conducted themselves in it?

## PARAPHRASE.

*Matthew xxvi. (12.) Mark xiv. (8.) John xii. (7.)* By reserving such a quantity of valuable ointment for this occasion, she has, in fact, reserved it for my funeral. It is like the last kind office to a departing friend, where no return is expected; and in this light I shall consider it.

## SECTION LXVIII.

*Jesus clears the Temple, and curses the barren Fig-tree.*

*Matthew xxi. 12—21; Mark xi. 11—26; Luke xix. 45, 46; John ii. 14—22.*

JESUS is now arrived at Jerusalem, to that Feast of Passover at which he was put to death. He had spent some time in the country beyond Jordan, and in the desert, or less populous part of Judea, on account of the Jews having sought his life. His journey to Jerusalem at this time drew

from the prophecies of the O. T. was not adapted to convince Gentile readers, unacquainted with the peculiarities of the Jewish history, and with the Jewish Scriptures." *Wakefield*, p. 287.

\* *Com. I.* pp. 261, 262. "Blessed, in the name of the Lord, be he that cometh." *Bowyer*, (on *Matt. xxi. 9.*) p. 12.



particular attention, in consequence perhaps of his having dropped some expressions which were thought to intimate that he would soon assume a regal character. Indeed, having now no farther measures to observe with respect to the Jewish rulers, he assumed more authority, and more outward marks of dignity, than he had ever done before.

His commendation of *Mary* for anointing him with so great a quantity of valuable ointment, probably in the presence of a large company of persons of consequence, was a tacit acknowledgment of his claim to a very high character. But his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, amidst the acclamations of the populace, who saluted him with the titles appropriated to the *Messiah*, was in fact openly assuming that character. The reason of the common people crowding after him in this manner was, no doubt, their expectation of his being that prince whom they had so long expected; and their disappointment in this expectation from him may help us, in some measure, to account for their inveteracy against him a few days afterwards; when they preferred Barabbas to him, and were clamorous for his crucifixion, supposing some of them to be the same persons, though, as we shall see, it is very possible that they were not.

*Matt.* xxi. 12.\* This cleansing of the Temple was an act of great boldness, and openly setting at defiance all the power of the state, which had connived at so great an abuse. This was done at the height of Jesus's popularity, the common people attending him every where, and disposed to favour him in every thing that he should undertake, in such a manner as discouraged the Jewish rulers from opposing him.

For the convenience of those who came from a distance, and who could not bring along with them their lambs for the Passover, and other beasts for sacrifices, the outer court of the Temple had long been used for the purpose of buying and selling victims, and perhaps, as abuses are apt to increase, for other purposes of traffic, and the general business of exchange; those who came from a distance to Judea bringing the coins of their respective countries, and there exchanging them for such as were current in that country.

*Josephus* says, that no less than 256,500 lambs were offered at the Passover.†

\* See *Mark* xi. 15—17; *Luke* xix. 45, 46; *John* ii. 14—16; *Pearce*, I. pp. 141, 142; *Wakefield*, pp. 290, 291.

† *War*, B. vi. Ch. v. Sect. iii.

16. *Perfected praise.* The LXX. have the words here quoted, but in the *Hebrew* it is *ordained strength*.\*

This was virtually acknowledging that he was the *Messiah*.

*John* ii. 18. That is, What sign shewest thou that thou art the *Messiah*, seeing thou dost things that are peculiar to that character?

[19.† *This temple.* Our Lord might probably point to himself. It is plain that the Jews understood either by what he said on this occasion, or upon some other, that he had foretold his resurrection on the third day. On the whole, however, I rather think that Jesus did not expect to be understood, even by his own disciples, when he spake so obscurely; but his actually rising from the dead on the third day makes it sufficiently plain that he really *did* allude to it.] ‡

It may seem extraordinary that our Lord's enemies should have had a suspicion of his intended resurrection, and yet his disciples have no idea of it at all. But their notions of his dignity and approaching kingdom might make them have the greatest difficulty in conceiving that he should ever suffer death; and consequently, as he often spake very figuratively, they would be most apt to put some figurative construction on all that he said about a resurrection.

21, 22. This is a remarkable instance of Jesus's sometimes choosing to speak in a figurative and enigmatical manner, such as he knew would not be understood at the time. Being then in *the Temple*, his hearers would naturally think that he meant the building in which they were.

*Matt.* xxi. 17. His *lodging* out of the city might be on account of the vast crowds which were then in it, and also to avoid any tumultuous attacks upon him by the contrivance of his enemies.

18. Having left the house where he lodged early, before he had taken any refreshment.

*Mark* xi. 13. *The time of figs was not yet*; that is, the time of gathering figs. § According to Dr. Shaw, || the time

\* See *Psalms* viii. 2; *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 356, 357.

“Our Saviour here applies in a literal sense a passage from the *Psalms*, which the author intended as metaphorical. It is used merely as, what we should call, a classical quotation: a mode of application familiar to the Jews.” *Wakefield*, p. 291.

† *Destroy.* Perhaps, *you will destroy.* See *Le Cene*, p. 466; *Essay*, 1727, p. 130; *Pearce*, I. p. 472.

‡ *Harm.* 1780, p. 175.

§ It has been proposed to translate after the *Saxon* version, “where he was, it was the season of figs.” *Heinsius* in *Le Cene*, p. 491; *Essay*, 1727, p. 227. See Sir T. Brown's *Tracts*, No. 1, Sect. 43; *Hallett*, II. pp. 115—125; *Bowyer*, pp. 25, 26; *Wakefield*, in *Theol. Repos.* IV. p. 231; *Pearce*, I. pp. 262, 263; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 39, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 327.

|| *Travels*, p. 342. (P.)



of gathering figs in the East is the middle or latter end of June, but that it frequently happens in Barbary, and no doubt in a hotter climate, that, according to the quality of the preceding season, some of the more forward and vigorous will now and then yield a few ripe figs six weeks or more before the full season. It is well known, he adds, that the fruit of these prolific trees always precedes the leaves, and consequently when our Saviour saw one of them in full vigour, *having leaves*, he might, according to the common course of nature, very justly look for fruit, and *haply find some*; if not some *winter figs* upon it likewise. For those figs which are ripe in August often hang on the trees all the winter, and are gathered as a delicious morsel in the spring.

*Theophrastus*, as explained by *Pliny*, says of the Egyptian fig-trees, that the last year's fruit being pulled, about the beginning of the dog days, they presently produce more; and that when the sun rises with *Arcturus*, they blossom again, the winter nourishing the fruit. This fruit the Jews called בכורת (*bicurah*), as in *Hosea* ix. 10: "I found Israel like grapes in the Wilderness, as the first-ripe in the fig-tree."

14. This miracle of the blasting of the barren fig-tree was awfully prophetic of the calamities of the Jewish nation for their infidelity and other sins.

*Matt.* xxi. 19.\* This was probably a *fig-tree* on the public road, and therefore no particular person's property; and as Jesus chose to speak by parables and symbols, he took this opportunity to shew, in the case of a fig-tree, what would be the fate of the Jewish nation in general, in consequence of their unfruitfulness in a moral respect.

20. It does not appear that the disciples understood the true meaning of this miracle. They were only struck with the *greatness* of it.

*Mark* xi. 22.† Have a *faith of God*, that is, an exceeding strong faith, as a *river of God* signifies a great river.

\* "For ever; that is, as long as thou continnest to be a tree: which could not be for many years, if it had not withered. And this shews the limited sense in which these phrases *for ever*, *eternal*, &c. must sometimes be understood.—Paul tells *Philemon*, that he may now have Onesimus *for ever*—*αἰώνιον*—or as long as he lives. And this corresponds to the usage of other languages:

----- dominum vehet improbus, atque  
Serviet æternum, parvo quia nesciat uti.

*Hor. Ep. I. 40."* Wakefield, p. 295.

† "Some interrogatively, 'Have you faith in God?'" *Beza in Bowyer*, p. 26. See *Pearce*, I. p. 264; *Wakefield*, (on *Matt.* xvii. 20; xxi. 21,) pp. 249, 250, 296.

## SECTION LXIX.

*Some Greeks inquire concerning Jesus. A Voice from Heaven.  
Discourse concerning his Mission.*

*John* xii. 20—50.

FROM the time that Jesus entered Jerusalem at this last Feast of Passover, we find him almost continually in the Temple, the place of most public resort, where he discoursed as usual, especially concerning his divine mission, which we shall now find attested in a miraculous manner. And I have observed before, that of all the evangelists, *John* gives the most particular account of the warnings that the Jews had of their approaching ruin on account of their rejection of Jesus, and of the evidence they had of his divine mission; as he records many of his discourses to this purpose, omitted by the other evangelists.

*John* xii. 20. As these *Greeks* attended at the Passover, it is possible that they might be proselytes to the Jewish religion, though many persons who were not entirely proselytes, not being circumcised, but who had a respect for the Jewish religion, and were worshippers of the true God, attended the service of the Temple in the exterior court.\* Indeed, idolatrous princes sometimes chose to offer sacrifices, or had them offered in their name at the Temple; and such offerings were not rejected by the Jews.

21. As these Greeks were acquainted with *Philip, who was of Bethsaida*, which bordered upon *Syro-Phœnicia*, it is probable that they were of that country, as well as the woman whose daughter Jesus cured of madness.†

27. It is no wonder that Jesus, being a man, should, on the near approach of his sufferings, feel much anxiety and distress. Much must have passed in his own mind of which we have no account. Here we have the first intimation of his giving any symptom of it in public, and we see that his feelings on this occasion were exactly similar to those which he had in what is called his *agony*, in the garden. He earnestly wished (as what man would not?) to be excused his dreadful sufferings, and violent death; but at the same time he expresses his entire acquiescence in the will of God,

\* See *John* vii. 35; *Acts* xviii. 4; *Lardner*, XI. pp. 279—282; *Pearce*, I. pp. 512, 548.

† See *Mark* vii. 26; *supra*, p. 174.



in the plan of whose providence that event was absolutely necessary to the greatest and most benevolent purposes.

28. This is the third time that Jesus was honoured in this remarkable manner, by an audible voice from heaven, attesting the Divine approbation of him. The first time was at his baptism, and the second at the mount of transfiguration.

29. Those who did not distinguish the words, but only heard a loud noise, must have been those who were at a distance; while those who were near enough to distinguish the sounds, said that it was the voice of *an angel*.\* It was probably too loud to be that of a man.

31.† By *the ruler of this world*, Mr. Wakefield, in this place, and also in *Chap. xiv. 30*, understands Christ himself.‡

34. The Jews to this day suppose that the *Messiah* will first rescue their nation from their state of captivity and servitude in other countries; that the resurrection will then take place; that the *Messiah* will continue to live along with those who will be raised from the dead, and that the age of man in general will, from that time, be equal to that of the antediluvians. Their authority for this is *Isaiah lxxv. 17—25*.§

36. Probably retiring to Bethany, where he always passed the night, after which he appears constantly to have resorted to the Temple, where he continued the greatest part of the day. Accordingly, when he was upon his trial before the high-priest, who inquired concerning his doctrine, he said that he had taught daily in the Temple, in the most open manner.

37. Notwithstanding these miracles, which clearly proved him to have a commission from God, the Jews thought that he wanted two necessary characters of their *Messiah*. He had not *the sign from heaven*, which they expected, and what was more, he assumed no marks of royalty, but peremptorily rejected all offers to make him a king.

38. The passage alluded to is *Isaiah liii. 1*, in which the obstinacy and infidelity of the Jews were clearly described, being foreseen by God, and made subservient to the purposes of his wise providence.

43. In times of persecution there will be many persons in this situation, not having courage to act consistently with

\* *Wetstein in Pearce*, I. p. 549.

† See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 68.

‡ *Wakefield. (P.)* See *W.'s Notes*, p. 112, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 397.

§ See Vol. XII. p. 208.

their principles. In those times Christianity will have more friends than publicly appear to be so, as at other times it will have fewer; the same motive, viz. a wish to be thought well of by persons of fashion and power, and even by the populace, then leading men to make a public profession of Christianity, which in other circumstances would lead them to act a contrary part. In neither case are they influenced by a love of truth, but by some worldly consideration. It may be of use to us to ask ourselves seriously, what part *we* should probably take in time of persecution for conscience' sake.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* xii. (23.) Jesus said, The application of these Greeks to see me, suggests the joyful idea of all nations becoming my disciples, and partaking of the blessings of the Gospel. And now the time draws very near for that awful event, which is absolutely necessary to all the great ends of my ministry, viz. my death and resurrection, after which I shall be glorified. (24.) But my death is as necessary to the conversion of the world to the belief of the Gospel, as the casting of a seed into the ground is necessary to the multiplication of it. (25.) And, alarming as it may seem, all my faithful followers must be as ready to meet death in the profession of the faith of the Gospel as myself. In the case of persecution, he that loves his life, so as to deny his religion for the sake of it, shall forfeit a life of infinitely more value than the present; but he who, from a conscientious regard to his religious principles, is willing to suffer death rather than renounce them, shall receive in exchange for it eternal life hereafter. (26.) Every person who professes himself to be my servant, must follow me wherever I go, though death should be in the way. But it will be an ample recompence for this that my Father will honour and reward all my faithful followers, of whatever nation they may be.

(31.) Now is the time fast approaching, when vengeance will be taken on all those who reject me; since, after this voice from heaven, they have had all reasonable evidence of my divine mission, and are not convinced by it. Soon will my triumph over all the powers of darkness, of sin, and death, be complete. (32.) For if I be raised upon the cross, it will, in fact, be as a standard, to which all mankind will, in due time, be drawn. (33.) By being lifted up, he alluded to the manner of his death, viz. crucifixion.



(34.) The people answered, We learn in our prophetic books, that the reign of the Messiah is to last for ever ; how then can he be put to death ? What Son of Man dost thou mean ? We know of no Messiah so characterized.

(35.) Jesus said, Do not now cavil at what I say, but improve the opportunity that yet remains of profiting by my advice, and the last warnings that I shall give you, that darkness and destruction may not overtake you. (36.) Profit by the light which you now have, that, in consequence of becoming truly enlightened and wise here, you may shine as the sun in the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever hereafter.

(47.) As to those who do not believe on me, I am not now come to pass sentence upon, and punish them. My commission at present is not to judge the world, but by my instructions, and faithful warnings, if it be possible, to save it.

(50.) Whatever I say is by commission from my Father, and obedience to his will ensures eternal life and happiness. I shall, therefore, at all events, persist in executing my commission, and in speaking and doing whatever I have received in charge from him.

## SECTION LXX.

*The Discourse concerning the Baptism of John. The Parable of the Man who had two Sons, and of the Householder who planted a Vineyard.*

*Matt.* xxi. 23—46 ; *Mark* xi. 27—33 ; xii. 1—12 ;  
*Luke* xix. 47, 48 ; xx. 1—19.

*MATT.* xxi. 23. Jesus had now made what we may call his *triumphal entry* into Jerusalem ; and, in the height of his popularity among the people, had driven all the buyers and sellers out of the Temple ; an act of power very unlike any thing that he had exerted before. Till this time he had carefully avoided doing any thing of a *civil nature*, or that could alarm the governing powers. This high act of authority would therefore naturally excite their attention, and produce the inquiry concerning it.

24. Jesus had already done enough to prove his divine mission to any impartial observer, and therefore upon this occasion he might justly decline giving a direct answer to a question which was only intended to insnare him. He

therefore contents himself with shewing them how they might answer it for themselves;\* and he took this opportunity of shewing the common people how ready his enemies were to say what was contrary to their real persuasion, when their interest, or reputation, would be endangered by an open avowal of the truth.

26. *John* appears to have been much more popular than *Jesus*, which may be pretty easily accounted for. *John* announced to the Jews the near approach of a greater prophet than himself, which would naturally raise their expectations concerning their promised *Messiah*, and of course such a *Messiah* as they wished for. But *Jesus*, though giving the most indisputable evidence of his actually being the *Messiah*, appeared to be such a *Messiah* as they did not wish for.

27. The authority by which *John* spake, and by which *Jesus* acted, were the same, *John* having borne testimony to him. If, therefore, the Jewish rulers could satisfy themselves with respect to the one, they might also with respect to the other.

28.† There is something peculiarly awful in the prophetic meaning of the parables which our Lord delivered on this occasion in the Temple, all of them plainly enough foretelling the rejection and destruction of the Jews.

31. By this parable *Jesus* shews that the condition of the Pharisees, who were then discoursing with him, and endeavouring to ensnare him, was really more hopeless than that of persons openly wicked.‡

\* “Grotius remarks, that our Lord so proposed this question, as to shew that he had sufficient reason not to answer theirs. For how were they likely to believe him, who pretended to a divine commission, when they had not believed in *John*, and yet at the same time durst not dispute his designation from heaven? Besides, was any declaration of our Lord respecting himself calculated to convince those men of the divinity of his character, whom the most striking miracles, displayed openly before their eyes, were incapable of convincing? See *ver. 14.*” *Wakefield*, p. 296.

† “The following parable, which is extremely applicable to the case of the Jews, who rejected the Gospel, and to the Gentiles, who readily embraced it, is not mentioned by *Luke*. This evangelist thought, perhaps, that the preference here given to the son, who repented and obeyed, might have contributed to make the Gentile high-minded, as the apostle, with whom he was so familiar, expresses himself on a similar argument. *Rom. xi. 18—21.*” *Ibid.* p. 297.

‡ “When our Lord asks, which of the two brothers in the parable did the will of his father, he only means to ask, which was the more meritorious of the two. For even the first was not blameless. He should have obeyed his father's voice at once, and without hesitation: as the publicans and harlots were to be greatly commended for repenting and believing in the Gospel; but were highly culpable in having sinned before.” *Ibid.*



32. That is, what they esteemed to be *righteousness*,\* with all the outward rigour which they expected in a prophet.

33. *Chardin* found "wine presses in Persia," which "were formed by making hollow places in the ground, lined with mason's work."† It is also customary in the East to have towers in gardens and vineyards.‡

34. In those times it was usual to pay rent in kind.

36. *Of more weight and dignity than the first.* §

39. We see that the great object of the mission of *Christ*, here represented by *the son of the householder*, as distinguished from *the servants*, was the very same with that of other prophets who had gone before him, viz. to bring men to repentance and good works, represented by *receiving the fruits of this vineyard*; and therefore it was not necessary that he should be of a nature different from them. Accordingly when the dressers of the vineyard killed this son, his death is only considered as an act of more atrocious wickedness than that of beating or abusing the servants, and had no farther aspect with respect to them. We see nothing like the divinity of *Christ*, or the doctrine of atonement, in this parable, or indeed in any other of our Saviour's discourses.

This parable shews in the strongest light the absolute incorrigibleness of the Jewish nation in general, and of the Pharisees in particular, in consequence of resisting every method which the Divine Being had taken to reclaim them, and the justice and awfulness of the judgments with which they would be overtaken.

42. The passage alluded to is *Psalms* cxviii. 22, 23. ||

*The head of the corner.* This does not mean the foundation stone, but the uppermost angular stone, which binds together all below it. ¶

44.\*\* This is an allusion to punishments used in the Eastern nations, of throwing criminals down from a tower upon stones, and also throwing stones from that eminence upon them.

\* "In the way of righteousness, is the Hebrew phraseology for a righteous person: a form of speech perpetually employed in the O. T." Wakefield, p. 297.

† Harmer, I. p. 392. (P.)

‡ Ibid. II. p. 241. (P.) See Maundrell, p. 122.

§ Merklund. (P.)

¶ See Vol. XII. p. 112.

¶ See Pearce, I. p. 146. (P.) Wakefield, p. 298.

\*\* See Pearce, I. p. 146; Wakefield, pp. 298, 299. For a different arrangement of vers. 41—44, see Bowyer, p. 12.

46. It is not said that they took him to be the *Messiah*. That character he had never openly assumed; but they might have been convinced that, though he should not be the Messiah, he must at least be a great *prophet*, because no man could do the things which he did, if God had not been with him. Some of them, however, were so far blinded with their prejudices, as to ascribe his miraculous works to the co-operation of Satan.

*Luke* xix. 48. *Were very attentive to hear him*. Literally, *hung upon him to hear him*, a mode of expression signifying the most earnest attention.\*

## SECTION LXXI.

### *The Parable of the Wedding Supper.*

*Matt.* xxii. 1—14; *Luke* xiv. 16—24.

*MATT.* xxii. 1. Jesus is still instructing the people in the Temple during the last Feast of the Passover.

9. It is the general custom in the East not to carry away any part of the provision of an entertainment, but to call in the poor to eat it up.†

*Luke* xiv. 23. ‡ It is common in the East for travellers who do not intend to make any stay in a place, to stop to refresh themselves under hedges; so that it does not follow, from this circumstance, that the persons here mentioned were extremely poor and helpless, so as to require no *pressing* to come to an entertainment, which might detain them longer than they wished in a place.

*Matt.* xxii. 10. This parable, like many others, is calculated to justify the conduct of Divine Providence, in rejecting the Jews, and in admitting the Gentiles to those privileges which they had despised. It very much resembles that concerning the vineyard let out to husbandmen.

12. These garments were furnished by the person who made the entertainment, so that refusing to wear one was not an indication of poverty, but a mark of contempt.§

13. *Outer darkness*. The room in which the feast was kept may be supposed, according to the custom of the East, to be splendidly illuminated, in comparison with which the

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 420.

† See *Harmer*, II. p. 126. (P.)

‡ *Augustin* alleged the authority of this text for his persecution of the *Donatists*. See *Le Cene*, pp. 94, 95; *Essay*, 1727, p. 54; *Bayle's Phil. Com.*, 1708, II. pp. 369, &c.

§ See *Origen* in *Lardner*, II. pp. 536, 537; *Pearce*, I. pp. 148, 149; *Wakefield*, p. 301.



other room might be said to be dark, whether it was absolutely so or not.\*

14. *Many are called, but few chosen.* That is, Many profess the gospel, but few, in comparison, act agreeably to it, so as to be finally acknowledged by Christ to belong to him.

## SECTION LXXII.

*Jesus questioned by the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

*Matt.* xxii. 15—46; *Mark* xii. 13—37; *Luke* xx. 20—44.

*MATT.* xxii. 15. The rulers of the Jews were now determined to put Christ to death, and only wanted a pretence for doing it. The discourses that follow were not casual ones, but contrived on purpose to ensnare him. The first object was to embroil Jesus with the Romans, and, if that failed, to have some pretence for condemning him to death by the maxims of their own law, or at least to raise the prejudices of some part of the nation against him; and it is remarkable that we have here an example of attempts being made to ensnare Jesus by all the great classes of men in the country. [*Mark* xii. 13.]

16. *The Herodians* are generally supposed to be those who, like Herod the Great, were attached to the Romans, and had no objection to live under their government.† They were opposed to the more zealous *Pharisees*, who held that such subjection was unworthy of their nation, as *the peculiar people of God*, and ought to be resisted as *unlawful*. These Herodians and Pharisees, however, agreeing in their common prejudices against Jesus, came together, for the purpose of ensnaring him.

21. This was no direct answer to their question, but it indirectly reproved both the parties. The one was taught that there were rights of civil power, which the *Pharisees* in a manner acknowledged by using the Roman money; and the *Herodians* were taught that they ought not to sacrifice their religion to any civil governor.‡

28. As the original revelation of God concerning *a resur-*

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 149; *Wakefield*, pp. 301, 302.

† See *Gregory*, pp. 148—150; *Pearce*, I. p. 149; *Wakefield*, p. 305.

‡ “*Polycarp’s* observation, quoted by Grotius, is very good. Δεδιδαγμεθα αρχαις και εξουσιαις, απο Θεου τεταγμεναις, τιμην κατα το προσηκον την μη βλαπτεσαν ημεις αποναιμεν. We are taught to give principalities and powers, appointed by God, that share of honour, which is suitable in itself, and not prejudicial to ourselves.” *Wakefield*, p. 305. See, on *Matt.* xiv. 4, *ibid.* p. 207.

rection was lost, (for it is not to be found in the books of the *Old Testament*, and in our Saviour's time the Jews had no other sacred books than those which are come down to us,) it is no wonder that the doctrine of a future state should in a course of time come to be misunderstood, and that with the *evidence* of it, the *effect* and *use* of it should also be diminished.

It is plain, from this passage, that the Pharisees among the Jews entertained very imperfect notions of the resurrection, since they had not been able to answer such a question as this. They had no idea of living in a future world, but in the manner in which they lived here.\*

31, 32. This argument of our Saviour's evidently goes on the supposition of there being no intermediate state: for, admitting this, God might, with the strictest propriety, be said to be *the God of those patriarchs*, as they were then living and happy, though their bodies were in the grave.† Whereas, on the supposition of their being without life or enjoyment at that time, his relation to them as *their God*, which was indissoluble, was a security to them for their future life and happiness. There does not, however, seem to be much force in the argument, except with the Jews, to whom it was addressed, and who admitted similar constructions of Scripture: for though *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* had perished, the person [*Mark xii. 26*] who *spake to Moses*

\* See *Wakefield* (on *vers. 29, 30*), pp. 306, 307.

† Joseph Mede, in his Letter to Dr. Twisse, in 1635, says, "I doubt not you have felt some scruple (as well as others) at our Saviour's demonstration of the *resurrection*, in the gospel (*Matt. xxii., Mark xii.*).—How doth this conclusion follow? Do not the spirits of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* yet live? God should then be the God of the living, though their bodies should never rise again. Therefore some *Socinians* argue, from this place, that the spirits of the just lie in the sleep of death until the resurrection." He then proceeds to shew how he avoids this seemingly obvious inference. See *Mede*, p. 801.

"Christ's argument seems to imply that God would not be *the God of the living*, if their bodies were not to be raised; and so that men's souls would not live, if there was to be no resurrection of the body." *Hallett*, I. pp. 321, 322. See *ibid.* II. pp. 243, 244.

"The subject, here discussed, is the resurrection from death, and not the immortality of the soul; about which not a single word, that I can find, is said, either in the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. Now the Sadducees maintained, that there was no such thing as spirit, independent of body; and, therefore, inferred, that the soul consequently could not exist after death without the body. It might have been expected, then, that our Lord would have condemned and refuted this doctrine, had it been groundless: but he confines himself entirely to prove a resurrection, and not the continued existence of the soul. Indeed it would have been more obvious and satisfactory to prove the immortality of the soul, if he had known any such doctrine:—to prove that our consciousness and perception never cease; rather than that they will revive, after a long suspension. This would have been a more direct answer to the Sadducean notion, and have superseded all dispute about a resurrection." *Wakefield*, p. 307.



might make himself known to him, as he whom they had worshipped.\*

35—40. What the *lawyer* meant does not clearly appear ; but it is evident that the answer of Jesus was so judicious and forcible, that no handle could be made use of to his prejudice.†

44, 45. The passage alluded to is *Ps. cx. 1*. As the Jews expected a temporal *Messiah*, or such a king as *David* had been, they could not conceive wherein the superiority of the kingdom of the *Messiah* consisted, and therefore were not able to answer the question.

The reference in the *Psalm* is not to the *Messiah*, but to *David* or *Solomon* ; but as the Jews had applied this and other passages of Scriptures to the *Messiah*, the question was a fair one with respect to *them*, whatever Jesus himself might think of it.‡

46. From this time they had recourse to other methods to gain their wicked ends.

### SECTION LXXIII.

*Jesus inveighs against the Pharisees. He observes the Widow's Mite.*

*Matt. xxiii. 1—39 ; Mark xii. 38—44 ; Luke xx. 45—47 ;  
xxi. 1—4.*

*MATT. xxiii. 1.* The emissaries from the Scribes and Pharisees, and other leading men among the Jews, having now left Jesus without having been able to gain their purpose by the ensnaring questions they put to him, there now remained with him only a mixed multitude, and his own particular disciples. The minds of this company being, no doubt, thoroughly impressed with the baseness and treachery of the established guides of the people, Jesus took this opportunity of addressing his audience, who had been witnesses both of their treacherous designs, and their utter disappointment, on the subject of the character and maxims of those in whom they had been used to put so much confidence. And the time being now fully come when he was to bear the utmost effects of their malice, he is not sparing of his just invectives, for which they had given him repeated provocation.

\* See *Mark xii. 26, 27 ; Luke xx. 37, 38 ; the Author in Theol. Repos. I. pp. 300—303 ; Wakefield, pp. 307—309.*

† See *Mark xxviii. 34 ; Wakefield, p. 309.*

‡ See Vol. XII. p. 109 ; *Wakefield, pp. 309, 310.*

2. \* That is, It was their business to teach and explain the laws of Moses.

3. That is, So long as they truly explain the sense of Moses.†

5. *Phylacteries*. Scrolls of parchment, on which were written select sentences of the law, which the Jews wore on their foreheads and on their wrists, in obedience, as they imagined, to the precepts of *Moses*, in *Exod.* xiii. 9, 16; *Deut.* vi. 8; xi. 18.‡

6. *Borders of their garments*. The fringed borders which they were required to wear, *Numb.* xv. 38, 40.§

7. || The title of *Rabbi* had not at that time been long used by the Jews. History shews that their learned men were very fond of it;¶ and it was usual, out of greater respect, to repeat the titles in their addresses to them.

9. \*\* *Call no man your father upon the earth*. It is remarkable that, notwithstanding this prohibition, this very title of *father* has been most of all affected by the professors and teachers of religion; and certainly there is a sense in which it may be used very innocently, as by *Paul*, [1 *Cor.* iv. 15,] “Ye have not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

11, 12. There is no sentiment more frequently or more earnestly repeated by Jesus than this. We may therefore

\* “*Cathedra Mosis est cathedra in qua sedentes magistri legem aut populo publicè aut discipulis privatim interpretabantur; quomodo cathedræ vox Græcis quoque et Latinis usurpatur, unde philosophos cathedrarios dixit Seneca.*” *Grotius*, in *M. Roques*, VI. p. 116.

† From this passage *Hobbes* argued for unlimited civil obedience. *De Cive* (Ch. xi. Sect. vi.), 1669, p. 185. To this argument it has been thus well replied: “Le fameux *Hobbes* prétend prouver par l’Ecriture la nécessité d’une obéissance sans bornes, de la part du peuple, et cela par ce passage (*Matt.* xxviii. 2, 3).—Mais si le désir violent détablir le pouvoir despotique n’avoit pas aveuglé ce génie pénétrant, n’auroit-il pas apperçu, 1. Que J. Christ ne parle pas ici de l’obéissance qui doit être rendue aux princes, mais aux docteurs de la loi, qui sont représentés comme assis sur la chaire de Moïse, parce que ce grand législateur avoit le premier enseigné ces ordonnances de la part de Dieu. 2. Que le Sauveur n’entend pas sans doute qu’on fît tout ce que ces docteurs enseigneroient s’ils venoient à s’écarter de la loi divine; mais seulement tout ce qu’ils enseigneroient conformément à cette loi.” *M. Roques*, VI. pp. 115, 116. See *Wakefield*, p. 313.

‡ See *Jos. Antiq.* B. iv. Ch. viii. Sect. xiii.; *Godwyn’s Moses and Aaron*, 1628, Ed. 3, pp. 51—54; *Wotton* (on the Use of *Phylacteries*, &c.), I. pp. 171—204; *Harwood’s Introduction*, II. pp. 293—295. Dr. H. had seen “a Jewish phylactery in Dr. Furneaux’s possession.” See also *Pearce*, I. p. 153; *Wakefield*, p. 314.

§ *Deut.* xxii. 12. See Vol. XI. pp. 242, 274, 287.

|| See *Wakefield’s Notes*, p. 17, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 306.

¶ “Do not say, ‘Behold, I learn the law to become rich, to be called Rabbi.’” *Maimonides*. See *Wakefield*, p. 315.

\*\* “*And ye all are brethren*. This clause is very properly placed at the end of this verse in some MSS. For how are they brethren, but because they are sons of one common father? Compare *Tertullian*, *Apol.* Cap. xxxix. p. 326, Ed. Haverc.” *Wakefield’s Notes*, p. 17, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 306. See *Reeves’s Apol.* I. p. 334.



assure ourselves that there is no virtue more properly Christian than this of *humility*, and a readiness to consult the honour and happiness of other persons. Our Saviour himself came *not to be administered unto*, as a great king or prince, but to *minister*, as he says, and even to lay down his life for the good of others. Indeed the sole object of the dispensations of God himself is the happiness of his creatures. Should not this, then, be a great object with us? The surest criterion of our advancing in real excellence and perfection of character, is our acquiring a disposition to think less of ourselves, and of our own happiness, and more of that of others.\*

15. The pains taken by the Jews to make *proselytes* was excessive,† and is equalled by nothing but that of the Roman Catholics, and in itself considered, is certainly commendable. But then these converts in both cases were taught to despise and to hate all those with whom they had been formerly connected, looking upon them with abhorrence. The Jews called proselytism being *born again*, and maintained that it cancelled all former obligations of kindred, as well as of religion.

16. In this and the following verses, our Lord alludes to several absurd distinctions about the sacredness of oaths made by the Jewish doctors, who appear to have thought that to swear by any creature, or by what did not bear an immediate relation to God, was of no signification, or at all obligatory.‡

21. Here Jesus exposes the maxims of the Pharisees upon their own principles. All oaths respect God, and therefore

\* "What our Saviour asserts in these aphorisms is true, not only with respect to the final determination of God, and the future rewards of heaven, but also with respect to the natural tendency of pride and humility. No one sentiment of morality is more frequently found in ancient writers, or has been more excellently expressed.

"Juvenal delineates the conduct of an aspiring man under a very natural and pleasing figure,—Sat. x. 103, 107." *Wakefield*, p. 316. These lines, in which the poet describes the improvident ambition of Sejanus, are thus translated by Wakefield:

"'Tis granted then: that luckless fav'rite err'd;  
When the vain prayer for grandeur was preferr'd.  
In adding wealth to wealth, and power to power,  
He built but platforms to Destruction's tower:  
From stage to stage the giddy victim rose,  
To plunge still deeper in th' abyss of woes."

*Poetical Translations*, 1795, pp. 15, 16.

Dr. Johnson's well-known application of the passage to Wolsey, in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, is justly admired.

† See *Horace*, Sat. i. 4, *ad fin.* adduced by *Pearce*, I. p. 155, and examined by *Wakefield*, p. 318.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 318.

to swear by the Temple, or the altar, ought, according to them, to be as sacred and obligatory as swearing by God himself.

23. \* He had before explained the first and great commandment in a similar manner.

29†—31. That is, Your conduct in building sepulchres for the prophets, compared with your temper and disposition, so like that of your fathers, would make a stranger think, that what *you* do was only a continuation of what *they* had begun; they killing the prophets, and you burying them.‡

39. This is a quotation from *Ps. cxviii. 26*, which is said to have been always sung in the Temple at the time of their public festivals. § How it is to be understood in this connexion I do not see. It is probably a reference to the second coming of *Christ*. But then his friends, and not his enemies, will rejoice at it. It may refer to the glory with which he will then appear, and the general joy that will be expressed on the occasion; the Jews themselves then receiving him as their *Messiah*.

## SECTION LXXIV.

*Jesus prophesies concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem, and his second Coming.*

*Matt. xxiv. 1—41; Mark xiii. 1—32; Luke xxi. 5—33; xvii. 20—36.*

*MATT. xxiv.* This chapter contains a most remarkable prophecy concerning the utter demolition of the Temple, and the dispersion of the Jews, as to be accomplished *in that generation*,|| when there was far from being any appear-

\* See *Luke xi. 42; Hallett, I. pp. 12, 13; III. pp. 200, 209; Pearce, I. p. 156; Wakefield, p. 319.*

† See *Harmer, III. pp. 416, 424, 425.*

‡ See *supra*, p. 239. "All to the end of *ver. 32* should make one sentence;—and *ver. 31* should be in a parenthesis." *Grotius*, in *Bowyer*, p. 13. See *Pearce, I. p. 158; Wakefield, pp. 320, 321.*

§ See *Vol. XII. pp. 111, 112; Pearce, I. p. 160; Wakefield, p. 322.*

|| See *Bishop Newton "On the Prophecies," Diss. xviii.—xxi.; Wakefield, pp. 326—328.* Mr. T. F. Palmer maintained in *Theol. Repos.*, "that the Scriptures speak of but two comings of Christ, one in the reign of Tiberius, the other at the resurrection." He says, "The first person that I know of, who gave the right clue to understand this chapter, was the honest Mr. Whiston. He maintained that it did not concern one subject merely, the destruction of Jerusalem, but another, the second coming of Christ at the end of the world, for which opinion he is very illiberally treated by the *then orthodox* Dr. Whitby." Mr. P. agreed in this opinion



ance of such an event. The Jews were then at peace under the Romans, with whom they could have no prospect of contending, with success; or if they should have revolted, and been subdued, there was no example in all the Roman conquests of such a devastation being made in any country as is here foretold to take place in this. It is remarkable that almost every country flourished under the Roman government, more than they had done under their own; so that it was, in general, a blessing to the world. Least of all was it probable that any conqueror would wish to destroy so fine a building as the Temple. And we find that *Titus*, the Roman general, did use his utmost endeavour to preserve it, but in vain.

2.\* This was literally accomplished, the very foundation of the Temple being dug up.†

3. *What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the age.*‡ It is probable that the disciples imagined that our Lord would return to punish his enemies, and then take his temporal kingdom, at least some time before they died.

5. *Saying I am Christ.* This is a prophecy of the many pretended *Messiahs* by whom the Jews were so often deceived to their destruction. §

6.|| *Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars.* There were great convulsions in the Roman empire previous to the revolt of the Jews, and the destruction of Jerusalem.¶ But it more probably refers to the insurrections in *Palestine*.

9. *And shall kill you.* The first great persecution of the church was under *Nero*, in whose reign the Jewish war began.\*\* It was under him that *Peter* and *Paul* were put to death at Rome.

*Mark xiii. 11. Take no thought before hand what you shall speak.* This promise was either confined to the apos-

with Mr. Henry Taylor, and thus would invalidate "Mr. Gibbon's argument of our Lord's giving a false prophecy." See "Thoughts on the Nature of the Grand Apostacy," 1781, pp. 49—56, and the *Dissertation* annexed, pp. 176—181; *Theol. Repos.* VI. pp. 186—193.

\* "Perhaps better imperatively, 'Do not behold with admiration all these things.'" *Homburgius* in *Bowyer*, p. 13. "Some MSS. omit the negative *e*, and I have neglected it in the translation: nor is it found in the parallel passages of *Mark* (xiii. 2) and *Luke* (xxi. 6)." *Wakefield*, p. 329.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 161; *Wakefield*, p. 329.

‡ See *Pearce*, I. p. 162; *Wakefield*, pp. 329, 330.

§ See *Josephus*, (War,) B. ii. Ch. xiii. Sect. iv. v.; *Pearce*, I. p. 162; *Wakefield*, p. 330.

|| "A comma after *opore*, 'See that ye be not troubled.'" *Bowyer*, p. 13.

¶ See *Jos. Antiq.* B. xx. Ch. iii. iv.; *War*, B. ii. Ch. xviii.; *Pearce*, I. p. 163.

\*\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 331, 332.

tolic age, or the meaning may be, that their circumstances, and the goodness of their cause, would be sufficient, without any supernatural assistance to suggest what they ought to say, and therefore that they did not need to be anxious about the matter.\*

*Luke* xxi. 5. Besides the costly buildings of the Temple itself, there were deposited in the rooms belonging to it presents of great value from wealthy and pious persons. There was a golden table given by Pompey, and some golden vines, *Josephus*† says, of an exquisite workmanship. The Heathen temples had presents (called *αναθήματα*) of the same kind.

18. *But there shall not an hair of your head perish.* The meaning of this must be, that the most trifling losses would be made up to them; for just before he had said that they would be put to death.

19. *In your patience possess ye your souls.* *Pearce* would render it, *By your perseverance ye shall enjoy your lives*,‡ that is, if you continue firm in my religion, your perseverance shall be rewarded with the preservation of your lives, in the general ruin.

*Matt.* xxiv. 14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world*, that is, in all the Roman empire.§ But if there be a double sense of this prophecy, we may perhaps infer, that, as the first coming of Christ to judge the Jews was preceded by the preaching of the gospel in all the Roman empire, so his coming to judge Antichrist (who is also said to be “destroyed by the brightness of his coming”) may be preceded by the preaching of the gospel *in all nations*. And as very rapid advances are now making towards the discovery of all the habitable world, this great event may not be far off.

15. *The abomination of desolation*, that is, the abomination that maketh desolate, meaning the Roman armies, the standards of which were images, and objects of adoration, which were held in abhorrence by the Jews.|| This is more evi-

\* See *Luke* xii. 11, and a defence of this explanation in “Five Letters concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, translated out of French, (of *Le Clerc*,) 1690, pp. 42—51. See also Mr. Lowth’s *Vindication*, in answer to the *Five Letters*, 1692, pp. 73—88.

† *Antiq.* B. xv. Ch. xi. Sect. iii. See *Pearce*, I. p. 426.

‡ *Com.* I. p. 428. See Dodson’s *Isaiah*, (iv. 3,) pp. 175, 176; Wakefield’s *Notes*, p. 78, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 365.

§ See *Mede*, p. 705; Wakefield, pp. 333, 334.

|| See *Jos. Antiq.* B. xviii. Ch. v. Sect. iii.; *War*, B. ii. Ch. xix. Sect. iv. B. vi. Ch. vi. Sect. i.; *Lordner*, VII. pp. 44, 45; *Pearce*, I. p. 165; Wakefield, pp. 334, 335.



dent, from comparing this with the parallel passage in *Luke* xxi 20, where it is said, "When ye see Jerusalem encompassed with armies."

*Whoso readeth, let him understand.* These may be the words of the evangelist, who wrote about the time that some of these signs were taking place.

*Luke* xxi. 24. *And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* This seems to imply that the desolation of Jerusalem is to continue till the general conversion of the Gentiles, and that, upon this event, it is to be no more in possession of the Gentiles, but that the Jews are to repossess it.

25. *The sea and the waves roaring.* A figurative description of convulsions among nations by wars, &c.

*Matt.* xxiv. 27. *As the lightning, &c.* Alluding to the rapidity of this desolation.\*

28. *Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* That is, the Roman armies will find and conquer all opposition, as easily as the *eagle* finds and seizes its prey. Here may also be another allusion to the figure of *eagles* in the Roman standards.†

29, 30. This seems to be the highly figurative language, in which the ancient prophets described the overthrow of states,‡ the *sun*, *moon* and *stars* representing earthly potentates, and such great convulsions are always said to precede the establishment of the proper kingdom of God or of Christ. *The stone cut out of the mountain without hands*, which represents that kingdom, is in some way or other to fall upon, and break in pieces, all the preceding kingdoms, before itself "become a great mountain filling the whole earth."§ In this part of the prophecy, therefore, there cannot, I think, be a doubt but that Jesus alluded to this great event, and not to the destruction of Jerusalem; though it is very possible that since he declared, as we shall find, that he did not know the time of his second coming, and therefore was left to his conjectures on the subject, he might connect these two events together, and thence might arise the idea of his coming being much nearer than it was.

\* See *Wakefield*, p. 339.

† See *Pearce*, l. pp. 167, 168; *Wakefield*, p. 339.

‡ "The heaven of this political world is the sovereignty, whose *hosts* and *stars* are the powers ruling that world. The *earth* is the peasantry, or *vulgus hominum*, together with the terrestrial creatures serving the use of man." *Mede*, pp. 615, 616.

§ See *Dan.* ii. 34, 35, 44, 45, Vol. XII. pp. 314, 315; *Pearce*, l. p. 168; *Wakefield*, pp. 339—342, where he contends that "this passage (*vers.* 29—31) can relate to nothing but the *ruin* of *Jerusalem*, and the subversion of the *Jewish polity*, civil and religious."

What immediately follows is certainly descriptive of the day of judgment, and not of the destruction of Jerusalem, at least not literally.

31. *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect.* This is thought to refer to the care that Christ took of his disciples, all of whom retired from *Judea*, in obedience to these warnings, and thereby escaped the general ruin. But the language is the very same with that in which the final coming of Christ to judge the world is described by our Lord, and *Paul*,\* on other occasions; so that if this prophecy was not principally intended for the day of judgment, there should seem to be at least an allusion to it, the two events being, in several respects, similar.†

34. *This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.* These words seem to limit the proper meaning of all the expressions in the preceding *verses*, [strongly figurative as they are, and literally descriptive of the day of judgment, to the judgment of Jerusalem, and the desolation of *Judea*] ‡

If I might indulge a conjecture of my own, it would be, that in the *verses* 29—31, our Lord intended to describe the general judgment, as an event distinct from what he had before said concerning *Judea* and *Jerusalem*; for it is said, “After the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened,” &c. As to the words *immediately after*, they may mean, in the eye of God, to whom, as we read, [2 *Peter* iii. 8,] “a thousand years are as one day.” At *ver.* 32, “Now learn a parable of the fig-tree,” our Lord returns to his original subject, the judgment and desolation of *Judea*; and to that only I should refer what he says, *ver.* 34, “This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.”

To me it seems very probable, that this, and the other prophecies of our Lord, led his disciples to imagine that his final coming to judge the world was not far distant. Even the apostle *John* seems to have had some expectation of this

\* See 1 *Cor.* xv. 52; 1 *Thess.* iv. 16.

† “This whole verse is expressed after the eastern manner, and means only that Jesus would gather the believers together for their preservation.” *Pearce*, l. p. 169.

“Christ is here described in prophetic language, as a mighty sovereign, issuing his commands by his messengers, (τὰς ἀγγελὰς αὐτοῦ,) and attended by heralds with their trumpets (σαλπιγῆς) announcing his approach.” *Wakefield*, p. 342.

‡ This conclusion of the sentence I have supplied from *Harm.* 1780, p. 196. In the *Northumberland* edition, after the word *verses* followed “to the day of judgment, as well as the desolation of *Judea*,” evidently an error of the press. On *ver.* 34, see *Mede*, p. 752, and on “the characteristic discrimination of genuine prophecy from pretension and imposture,” *Wakefield*, p. 343.



kind, when, at the conclusion of the Book of *Revelation*, he says, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." If the apostle had a just idea of the real distance of time that would intervene between his time and the final coming of Christ, and yet say he would come *quickly*, why might not our Lord use the word *immediately*, in the same extended sense?

41. In the East, Dr. Shaw says, most families grind their wheat and barley at home, having two portable millstones for that purpose, that when expedition is required, two persons may assist in the operation, and that it is usual for women only to do this business.\*

*Mark* xiii. 32. *Neither the Son.* It is very extraordinary that any person can read this passage, and imagine Christ to be the omniscient God. That Christ should know this, *as God*, but be ignorant of it, *as man*,† is too trifling to be replied to. On this principle there could be no union of the two natures, and consequently Jesus would be no more God than he is upon the scheme of *Socinus*.

xvii. 20.‡ *Not with observation*, that is, not with external pomp and splendour, to strike the eyes of mankind.

21. *The kingdom of God is within you*,§ that is, it has already commenced, though it has escaped your observation.

29. *He rained fire*, that is, *God*|| made it to rain.

34. *Upon the same couch*, or at supper together.¶

## SECTION LXXV.

*Admonitions concerning Watchfulness, with the Parables of the Ten Virgins, and of the Talents.*

*Matt.* xxiv. 42—51; xxv. 1—30; *Mark* xiii. 33—37;

*Luke* xxi. 34—36; xii. 35—42.

WE have some time done with the discourses of Jesus to the people at large. The last conversation he held of this

\* *Shaw's Travels*, p. 251. (P.) See *Pearce*, I. p. 170; *Wakefield*, p. 346.

† "Which *Pearce* supposes." *Harm.* 1780, p. 196. See *Pearce*, I. p. 274, *Note*.  
"Il y eût autrefois des Zeleux indiscrets qui osèrent effacer de l'évangile ce qui est dit, que le fils même ne connoissoit pas le jour du jugement, (*Mark* xiii. 32,) parce qu'ils trouvoient indigne de Jesus Christ qu'il ignorast aucune chose. S. Augustin, S. Jérôme et S. Ambroise accusoient les Arriens d'avoir inséré dans l'évangile que le fils ignoroit le jour du jugement, quoi qu'on le trouve dans la version Syrienne qui étoit en usage longtems devant Arius." *Le Cene*, p. 772. See *Irenæus*, *Basil*, and the confession of Bishop Bull, in *Clarke's Scrip. Doctr.* (No. 773), Ed. 3, pp. 151—154.

‡ "Another similar prophecy was delivered to the Pharisees some time before." *Harm.* 1780, p. 194. See *Pearce*, I. p. 407.

§ "Rather 'among you.'" *Ibid.* I. p. 407. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 73, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 360.

|| "As in *Gen.* xix. 4." *Pearce*, I. p. 408.

¶ *Wakefield.* (P.)

kind was that in which he delivered his severe invective against the Pharisees, after their insidious attempts to ensnare him, in order to have a pretence to put him to death. He closed it in saying that they should not see him any more till they should say, *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.\**

After this he retired with his disciples to the Mount of Olives, from which, being in view of the Temple, he delivered in their hearing the remarkable prophecy concerning the destruction of that famous edifice, and the utter desolation of Judea. Thence he took occasion to speak of the end, not of the Jewish state, but of the world, speaking of the two events, as it appears to me, with sufficient distinctness; saying that the former would come to pass in that generation, but that with respect to the other he was altogether ignorant, as it was known to his Father only.

*Matt.* xxiv. 42. From this he was led to speak with peculiar earnestness of the great duty of *watchfulness*, because at such an hour as we know not, the Son of Man will come, and require an account of our conduct.

51. *He will separate him from the honest.†*

*Luke* xxi. 35. *As a snare.* The Jews were surprised in Jerusalem at the Passover, which drew thither a vast concourse of people, most of whom perished miserably.

36. *And to stand before the Son of Man.* This seems evidently to refer to the day of judgment, and to mean their being finally approved of him.

*Matt.* xxv. 1. This parable respects not the destruction of Jerusalem, but the day of judgment,‡ and contains a serious admonition to us all to improve every talent committed to us, as we shall certainly give an account of it at the last day.

To understand this parable, it should be known that it is the custom in the East for the bridegroom to fetch his bride from her father's house in the evening, and generally by the light of lamps.§

4. *Chardin* says, that "in many parts of the East, instead

\* See *supra*, p. 277.

† Bishop Barrington, in *Bowyer*. (P.) "Cut him off, that is, separate him from his fellow-servants, by sending him to a prison, to the mines, or to a house of correction." *Pearce* [I. p. 171]. But *Shaw* supposes that the punishment here meant is *sawing between two boards*, which he says is used in Barbary, and is probably of great antiquity in the East. *Travels*, p. 254." *Harm.* 1780, p. 198. See *Pearce*, pp. 171, 172; *Wakefield*, pp. 347, 348.

‡ Yet see *Pearce*, I. p. 173; *Wakefield*, pp. 350, 351.

§ See *Pearce*, (on *Matt.* xxii. 13,) I. p. 149; *Wakefield*, pp. 350, 351.



of torches, they carry a pot of oil in one hand, and a lamp, full of oily rags, in the other." \*

14. This parable of the *talents* was delivered on a former occasion.†

By *talents* we are to understand every power or opportunity of doing good, whether derived from riches, power, knowledge, or any other advantage. We are all stewards of the manifold goodness of God, and as stewards, should endeavour to approve ourselves faithful to our trusts.

## SECTION LXXVI.

### *An Account of the last Judgment.*

*Matt. xxv. 31—46.*‡

IN this discourse Jesus gives a more particular account of the final day of judgment,§ one of those great events of which he had given a general intimation before, but of the *time* of which he acknowledged that he was ignorant. Nothing in all the Scriptures, from the nature of the subject, is so interesting and awful as this. It is impossible to peruse it, if we give due attention to it, without emotion; being an account of the proceedings of that great day, from its reference to which every thing else in life derives its importance, and delivered by the person who is appointed by God to preside in it.

*Matt. xxv. 31.* Something figurative must be allowed in this account; but, at the same time, if we may depend upon the account of the apostle *Paul*, who had it by revelation from our Saviour, it must be in general literally true: at least, there is no appearance of figure in his account. In order to comfort the *Thessalonians* with respect to their deceased friends, he says, that they who are alive at the coming of Christ should have no advantage over those who died before that event, but that on the appearance of their Saviour, *the dead in Christ*, as they are called, *shall rise first*,

\* Harmer, II. p. 431, Note.

† See *supra*, p. 272.

‡ See *Com. and Ess.* II. pp. 117—122.

§ Bishop Pearce interprets *ver. 31*, that “*the Son of Man shall come in his glory to destroy the Jewish state*,” and that “*Jesus is still giving an account of what distinction will then be made between good and bad Christians*.” He, however, thinks, that in *vers. 41 and 46*, “*Jesus seems to have had the day of general judgment in his thoughts*.” *Com. I.* pp. 176, 177. See a conjecture, by Mr. Cogan, that Jesus does not here describe the general judgment, *Mon. Repos.* XIV. p. 369.

and that then they who shall be found alive shall be changed, and, joining those who will then be raised from the dead, shall *meet the Lord in the air*, and so shall be for ever with him.\*

In what manner the proceedings of this great day will be conducted, we cannot tell; but probably without any distinct or formal examination of every individual person, which indeed is not intimated in this account. Perhaps, by some means unknown to us at present, every person's real character will be at once conspicuous, so that the sentence of the Judge will strike all with the fullest conviction. But let us all attend to the account itself, in which we are so deeply interested.

32. To compare good men to *sheep*, and wicked men to *goats*, "in the eastern manner of speaking," is not unusual in the Scriptures. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 17: "Behold I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats." *Zech.* x. 3: "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats."†

36. The word *ἐπισκεπτομαι* signifies not so much to *visit*, as to *take the charge*, or *care of*.

37—44. It is observable that the leading character of the wicked is presumption, and that of the righteous, humility. It is obvious to remark with respect to them both, that their sentence could not have been any surprise to them if it had been passed before that time, namely, immediately after their deaths; and if they had lived under the execution of it from that time until the resurrection.

45. This account of the proceedings of the day of judgment, shews, in a strong light, the affectionate regard that Christ has for his disciples, and the interest he takes in what befalls them, considering whatever is done to them as done to himself. It shews how very important a part of our duty is our sympathy and concern for others; since, upon this solemn occasion, no other virtues are particularly specified. Our Lord, on another occasion, lays great stress upon it, by calling it his own *new commandment*, and the apostle John calls it both *an old* and *a new commandment*.

To impress the minds of the apostles with an idea of his great affection for them, was very necessary to support them during the interval between his death and resurrec-

\* See 1 *Thess.* iv. 15—17.

† *Pearce*, I. p. 176. (*P.*) "*Separateth*, keeping them in distinct flocks; as was the custom of the shepherds in those days. *Virg. Eclog.* vii. 2, 3. See *Theoc. Id. E.* 1—5." *Wakefield*, p. 356.



tion. All his discourses recorded in the Gospel of *John* have this tendency, and nothing can be more affecting and consolatory.

46. *Everlasting punishment*.\* *Αἰώνιον*, properly the punishment of *an entire period, age, or dispensation*.† The future rewards of virtue are expressed by the same term, and it will probably be on some other account than the good works of the present transitory life, that the happiness of a future state will be properly eternal. It may depend upon a continuance to improve in virtue,‡ which, however, may be *morally certain*; and the reformation of the wicked may be the consequence of the sufferings of a future state. This, however, is wisely concealed from us. We know our duty in this life, and the certain consequence of it; and we may assure ourselves that the God we worship will do nothing unjust, and therefore that there will always be a due proportion between crimes and punishment, virtue and reward, and there cannot be any justice or equity in punishing the offences of a short life with sufferings properly eternal, especially such as, though figuratively, are represented by fire.§

## SECTION LXXVII.

*Judas covenants to betray Jesus; the Disciples make Preparations for eating the Passover; Jesus washes his Disciples' Feet.*

*Matt.* xxvi. 1—5, 14—19; *Mark* xiv. 10—17; *Luke* xxi. 37, 38; xxii. 1—13, 25—30; *John* xiii. 1—17.

WE are now come to an incident in the life of Jesus, which was the least to be expected, viz. the treachery of *Judas Iscariot*, one of the twelve chosen apostles, but which was wisely ordered by Divine Providence to Manifest the innocence of his Master, and thereby furnish a striking evidence of the reality of his miracles and the truth of his religion.

\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 357—361; Vol. II. p. 62, Note †.

† “That the *English* words *eternal, everlasting, for ever and ever*, are unscriptural, and express not the true import of the original words (*αἰών, אֵלֶּם*) *æon, olem*,” see *Stonehouse's* “*Universal Restitution, a Scripture Doctrine*,” 1761, pp. 3—22.

‡ This opinion is maintained by Bishop Newton in his *Dis.* ix. “On the Final State and Condition of Men,” where he also advocates the doctrine of *Universal Restoration*. See his *Works*, 1782, 4to. III. pp. 724, 725.

§ See Vol. II. pp. 64, 351—353.

*Matt.* xxvi. 2.\* At the time that Jesus delivered this, there was no appearance of his being in more danger than he had been in on several occasions before; nay, in reality much less, because his popularity with the common people was greater than it had ever been, and on this account, in part, the apostles were at this very time disputing among themselves about the chief places in his kingdom. Jesus, however, knew by divine revelation that his death was very near. He was even apprized of the precise time, and of all the circumstances of it. He tells them that he was not only to die after two days, but to be crucified. This, therefore, was probably on the *Wednesday*.

5.† Jesus was still popular with the common people, they having still hopes that he would confound his enemies, and assume kingly power. When that hope failed they abandoned him.

14. *Luke* [xxii. 3] says that *Satan entered into Judas*. The term *Satan* signifies *evil* in general, especially bad dispositions of mind. Thus temptation is referred to Satan or the devil; but the Apostle *James* [i. 14] explains it when he says, then "is a man tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;" not therefore by any thing or any being foreign to himself, but by something within and belonging to himself. Indeed, our own depraved appetites and passions are abundantly sufficient to account for all the vice and wickedness that there is in the world. If we be upon our guard against them, we need not fear any other enemy.

*Judas* appears to have been a worldly-minded man, and to have become a follower of Jesus from thinking, with the rest of the apostles, that he would be a great king. But he wanted that disinterested love of truth and virtue, which, notwithstanding all appearances, would never suffer the rest of the twelve wholly to desert their Master, much less to betray him. Other causes might have contributed to the fatal resolution that he formed, especially *resentment*; and we are told that the principal offence that he took was at Jesus's commendation of *Mary* for bestowing upon him a box of precious ointment, which he thought had better have been sold, having a hope of embezzling a part of the price.‡ It is possible also that he might have more natural sagacity than the other apostles, and concluding that Jesus

\* "And in that day the Son of Man is delivered up." *Harm.* 1780, p. 202. See *Bowyer*, p. 14; *Pearce*, I. p. 178; *Wakefield*, p. 363; *W.'s Notes*, p. 20, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 309.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 179; *Wakefield*, pp. 363, 364.

‡ See *supra*, p. 275.



would never be a king, or perceiving that he was not much in his favour, he might think that whatever he was, or whatever he would be, it did not much concern *himself*. It is very evident that he had no suspicion of Jesus being an impostor. But men are often led by their passions to act contrary to their reason and better judgment, so as to do what they afterwards severely repent of, as was the case with Judas.

15. *Thirty shekels*, each of which being about half a crown of our money,\* was no great sum. But he was only to inform the enemies of Jesus where they might find him in his retirement, and to conduct them to him. And in his state of mind he might possibly think that there was no great harm in it; though, when he saw his Master condemned to die, his former regard to him might return with peculiar force, and lead him to see the same action in a very different light. It is probable that he was influenced more by resentment, which is very apt to change, than by avarice, which is a more permanent passion.

18.† Jesus's telling the apostles these minute circumstances‡ was well calculated to shew them that nothing could happen to him which he was not apprized of, and prepared for; and therefore when their consternation on the occasion of his death was a little over, it might enable them to think that all might be *right*, and that good would finally come out of that which then gave them so much disturbance.

*Luke* xxii. 24. Notwithstanding these repeated intimations which Jesus gave his apostles of his approaching death, so fully were they persuaded that he was to be a king, that they were not prepared to believe him in the literal sense of his words.

25. *Benefactors*, *Ευεργηται*. This was a title of some of the kings of *Syria* and *Egypt*.

30. We see here that Jesus makes no material difference between the situation of himself, and that of his apostles in a future state. As he is appointed to be a judge, so are they also called judges, as all princes or kings in former times were; so that it is perhaps to be understood as a title of *rank* and *power* in general, rather than of *office*. What is

\* See *Le Cene*, p. 308; *Essay*, 1727, p. 156; *Pearce*, I. p. 180.

† “Τον δεινα, that certain man. The article points out some person in particular, with whom they were acquainted. So (says *Grotius*) the Greeks express themselves when they do not mean any one indiscriminately, but some particular person, whom there is no occasion to specify by name.” *Wakefield*, p. 366.

‡ See *Mark* xiv. 13, 15; *Luke* xxii. 10, 12.

really meant by it we cannot now say. As in this, so in another world, Christ is to be considered as *the first-born among many brethren*, not differing from them at all in nature, for it is said that *in all things he was made like unto them*,\* and being rewarded for his obedience to the will of God, as all his faithful disciples will also be.

*John* xiii. 1. What is related by *John* in this chapter preceded the institution of the Lord's Supper,† of which this evangelist gives no account; though perhaps the conversation with Peter, with which it closes, might have taken place after that transaction.

By *this world* is here to be understood a state of trial and difficulty, which he was about to leave.

*He loved them unto the end.* To the very last period of his life, he shewed them marks of kindness and condescension.

2. This may be rendered, *When supper time was come.*‡

3. That is, having a divine commission which he was going to resign.§

4. Perhaps presently after sitting down, as if something had been neglected to be done.

7. *Thou shalt know hereafter.* That is, when I shall have done.|| Accordingly we find that then he did explain what he meant by the action.

8. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part ¶ with me.* Alluding not to the washing that he was about to administer, but to his being washed, and made clean, in a moral sense, by the influence of his doctrine.

10. Who have just bathed, and cannot have done more than just soiled their feet, in walking from the bath to the place of entertainment.\*\*

14. *Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*†† That is, to be ready to do the meanest offices for one another.

We have here a striking lesson on the subject of *humility*, occasioned probably by the contention among the apostles,

\* See *Rom.* viii. 29; *Heb.* ii. 17.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 553.

‡ *Wakefield.* (P.) *W.'s Notes*, p. 114, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 399. See *Pearce*, I. p. 553.

§ See *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 52, 411, 412.

|| See *vers.* 12, 14; *Pearce*, I. p. 554; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 114, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 399.

¶ "Non habebis partem." *Vulg.*

\*\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 354; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 114, N. T. Ed. 2, I. pp. 399, 400. A different reading is proposed from *Knatchbull* by *Le Cœne*, pp. 647, 648.

†† "Origen argues that the precept ought not to be understood literally. He says that it was formerly in use; but in his time (230) it was practised by very few." *Lardner*, II. p. 537.



of which this evangelist gives no account, but which is particularly related by Luke, which of them should be greatest in their Master's approaching kingdom. For instead of expecting his death, several circumstances, as I have shewn, seem to have led them to think that he would soon appear in his kingly character; such as his great popularity among the common people, the authority which he assumed in cleaning the Temple, and his open disregard of the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews, with respect to whom he had laid aside all his usual caution, notwithstanding their well-known attempts against his life. And what he had said in his late prophecy, of his coming in glory, to take vengeance on his enemies, might, in their state of mind, contribute to the same effect.

## SECTION LXXVIII.

*Jesus discovers the Purpose of Judas, foretells Peter's Denial of him, and institutes the Lord's Supper.*

*Matt.* xxvi. 20—29, 31—35; *Mark* xiv. 18—25, 27—31; *Luke* xxii. 14—23, 31—38; *John* xiii. 18—38; *1 Cor.* xi. 23—26.

JESUS and his disciples are now assembled in the evening on which the Jewish Passover was to be eaten, and on which he knew he was to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. We cannot wonder, therefore, that in this critical situation his mind should not be always tranquil. Being *a man*, he felt as other men would have done in the same circumstances; but at the same time he had that dignity and elevation of mind, with which his great prospects immediately succeeding his sufferings, could not fail to inspire him. His mind would also be supported by a consciousness of the intimate and peculiar presence of God with him, which was at this time evident by his distinct knowledge of every circumstance attending this awful scene, or leading to it. His telling his disciples where they should find the ass on which he was to make his entry into Jerusalem, and how they should find the man with a pitcher of water, whom they were to follow, and with whom they were to eat the Passover, all which had literally come to pass, were things of this nature; and, when reflected upon, would tend to give both him and them the greatest confidence and satisfaction.

*John* xiii. 18. In this he probably alluded to the love

which he had said he had for them, in the first verse of this *chapter*, and of which, as well as his condescension in shewing it, he had given them a proof in washing their feet. Of this love they had not all been equally the objects; for one of them, viz. *Judas*, was by no means deserving of it.

The passage alluded to is *Psalms* xli. 9.

19. Every instance of Jesus's foreknowledge of future events was calculated to give his disciples still fuller satisfaction with respect to his commission from God, and, in their circumstances, was particularly adapted to convince them that not only his being betrayed, but also his death, was expected by him, and therefore what he did not wish to avoid. And as these things did not discourage *him*, they ought not to discourage *them*.

20. What Jesus said upon this and other occasions is probably related out of the connexion in which it was delivered. What he here says is another instance of the many that he had already given his disciples of his great attachment to them. They were considered by him as if they had been part of himself. This he had expressed in the strongest manner possible in his account of the proceedings of the last day, when every act of kindness done to the least of them, would be considered as done to himself. All these marks of his attachment to his disciples, would tend to produce an equal attachment of them to him, and induce them either not to abandon him in his approaching sufferings and death, or prepare them to act with double zeal, when they should be recovered from the consternation into which that most unexpected event would throw them.

21.\* From the manner in which Jesus expressed himself upon this occasion, it is evident that *Judas* had behaved, upon the whole, in such a manner as had given no suspicion of his real character or designs. Jesus was sensible that the rest of the apostles would be surprised to hear that any of their body would act so ungrateful and wicked a part. Accordingly, it does not appear that their suspicions fell at all upon *Judas*, any more than upon any other person among them. It must therefore have been by particular information from God that Jesus was so well apprized of the real character and views of *Judas*, while his companions, who probably saw more of him than he did, had no suspicion of him.

\* See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 115, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 400.



What is here said of Jesus being *troubled in spirit* alludes, no doubt, to the apprehension he could not but be under on the near view of his sufferings and death. A day or two before this he had said, in reflecting upon it, *now is my soul troubled*; and we shall soon find him in an agony of mind, producing the most violent affections of body, under the same prospect. He was affected as any other man of equal sensibility of mind, and whose views of what was to befall him were as distinct as his would have been; but with a piety and resignation, which shewed the excellence of his character, he preferred the will of God to his own natural inclinations, in all events.

23. This is not doubted to have been *John*, the writer of this gospel, who, being reclined on the couch next to Jesus, had his head opposite to his breast, and therefore might be said to *lean on his bosom*.\*

25. This must have been spoken in a whisper, as well as the answer of Jesus, so as not to have been heard by the company.

26. In Barbary, and probably in the East, when the food is any liquid substance, after having broken their bread in little bits, they dip their hands and their morsels together into it.†

27. This is only the phraseology of Scripture, signifying that he had then completely formed his wicked purpose, his own bad disposition being the *Satan*, or tempter, in this case, and he needed no other.

29. As Jesus spake openly to all the disciples, when he said that one of them would betray him, *Judas* must have known that he was the person intended, and therefore that, in this speech of Jesus, he alluded to what he was about to do, and by the manner in which he spake, he must have perceived that his Master was under no apprehension about the consequences. This, one would have thought, might have led him to reflect and relent: but his purpose was formed, his measures were taken, his resentment continued, and he blindly followed the impulses of it. When men are engaged to a certain degree in bad measures, it is not always that a conviction of their being *wrong* will make them desist from them. The first step makes the next in a manner necessary. It behoves us, therefore, to attend chiefly to the beginnings of things.

\* See Wakefield's *Notes* (on *Luke* vii. 38), p. 56, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 344.

† *Shaw's Travels*, p. 232. (P.)

32. Here we see Jesus overlooking his approaching sufferings, and anticipating his future glory. It was natural for his mind to vibrate, as it were, between the consideration of these two necessarily connected things, his sufferings and his future exaltation, which was to be the reward of them; so that we sometimes find him distressed with the idea of the one, and soon after elevated with the prospect of the other. He here argues, that if God would be glorified by his death, that is, if that event would answer the great purposes of his providence, a noble recompence would certainly be made to him for it; and as his death was very soon to take place, the reward, which was to follow it, would soon take place also.

34. This was intended to check the ambition of his apostles, in contending for preferment to each other's prejudice. On the contrary, the spirit of the gospel leads to humility, and to perfect mutual love, and as the apostle says, [*Philipp. ii. 3,*] *to esteem others better than ourselves.*

37. This is a lesson against presumption. In all the great persecutions for conscience' sake, the most forward to present themselves were seldom those who shewed the greatest fortitude when they were put to the trial.

38. Before the next morning, and it was then the evening, so distinct and particular was the knowledge that Jesus had of every circumstance concerning himself and others on this great occasion. When this actually came to pass according to the prediction, it would tend to strengthen the faith of Peter in the divine mission of Jesus, and contribute to his recovery from the consternation into which he would be thrown. Seeing so clearly that God was with his master, he could not think of absolutely abandoning him, whatever might happen. His master, he must perceive, foresaw, and was prepared for, his cruel sufferings and death, and yet was not discouraged by them. Why then should he?

*Matt. xxvi. 31. For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, &c.* The allusion is to *Zech. xiii. 7.\**

34. What is here called *the cock-crowing*, was probably the sound of a trumpet on changing the watches or guards, the two last of which, being the nearest in the morning, appear to have been so called by the ancient writers. It is not probable that any cocks were kept in the precincts of the Temple, where the *Sanhedrim* was assembled,

\* See Wakefield, pp. 371, 372.



so that their crowing could be heard in that court of justice.\*

26. The death of Jesus, especially as preparatory to his resurrection, being of the greatest importance in the scheme of Christianity, and unquestionably the greatest proof of his love to men, being now at hand, he thought proper to institute a perpetual memorial of it, by a rite similar to that of the Passover among the Jews. That was in commemoration of the delivery of the Jews from their bondage in Egypt, and this may be said to be in commemoration of our deliverance from sin and death by the gospel. As the former was obligatory upon all Jews, and distinguished them from other nations, so this is peculiar to, and should be considered as obligatory upon all Christians, without distinction of age or sex.

*This is my body.* "The paschal lamb," says *Pearce*, "was called by the Jews *the body of the pass-over*, and therefore Jesus here seems to give to the bread the title of *my body*, or *the body of me*, that is, which is to be a memorial of me, as the paschal lamb is of the pass-over."† There would be more weight in this remark if the wine had not been called his blood.

*Luke* xxii. 17, 18. "These two verses should probably be placed after *ver.* 20, which will make the whole narration consistent with itself and with *Matt.* xxvi. 26, and *Mark* xiv. 22.‡

20. At the Passover, one particular cup of wine, that with which the celebration was concluded, was considered as more sacred than the preceding. This our Saviour seems to have used for the purpose of commemorating his death.§

*Matt.* xxvi. 28.|| Such, and so simple, is the Christian rite of *the Lord's Supper*. For surely, then, all who have any value for Christianity will attend upon it, as wearing the proper badge of their profession. Be the moral use of this rite more or less, or even nothing at all, yet that it was appointed to be observed by one who had a right to appoint it, viz. the Founder of our faith, cannot be questioned.

\* *Theol. Repos.* (Mr. T. F. Palmer), V. pp. 105—111. (P.) See Vol. II. p. 86, Note \*; *Wakefield*, pp. 372, 373.

† *Com.* I. p. 183. "This is: that is, *this represents my body*. So the eating of the paschal lamb is called *metonymically* the passover, because it represented the passing-over of the destroying angel." *Wakefield*, p. 368.

‡ *Beza.* (P.) *Bowyer*, p. 45.

§ *Spencer*, p. 1187. (P.) See *Pearce*, I. p. 433.

|| See *ibid.* p. 133; *Wakefield*, pp. 368, 369.

One reason why it is so much neglected, is evidently an indifference to Christianity, in consequence of which none of its ordinances will be attended upon, any farther than public decency requires. But with many this neglect is owing to a secret superstition, as if there was something peculiarly hazardous in attending upon it *unworthily* in consequence of the apostle Paul saying, in his account of it, [1 Cor. xi. 29,] that such would receive *judgment* to themselves; (for so it ought to be rendered, and not *damnation*, as in our version). But from his account of the irregularities of the Corinthians in their celebration of this ordinance, it is evident that by *unworthily* he meant *improperly*, not distinguishing it from a common entertainment; and that by *judgment* he either simply meant *censure*, or some *temporal judgment*, with which he supposed that they were visited on that account. It has no reference whatever to the state of man after death. Our only danger arises from professing Christianity itself, without living as becomes Christians; and this obligation affects all who will call themselves Christians, whether they attend to this particular ordinance or not.

29. As *new wine* was generally esteemed the most delicious in the East, the expression that Jesus here makes use of may signify that he should no more meet his disciples in circumstances of joy and rejoicing, except in a future state.\* That we shall not eat or drink in a future state is nowhere said, and though all men will then be immortal, it may not be without the usual supports of life. The only change that we are informed of with respect to the body, is, that it will not be liable to corruption, and that the difference of sexes will cease; human beings then becoming as the angels of God in heaven. Jesus did eat with his disciples after his resurrection. It may be said, however, that at that time that remarkable change had not taken place in his body, it being necessary that he should appear with his wounds open, as an evidence of his being the same person.

Luke xxii. 36. *But now he that hath a purse let him take it,—and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one;* that is, such difficulties are now before you in travelling to preach the gospel, that you have need of every thing that you can provide for your accommodation and defence. The expression may have been proverbial, signifying to provide against impending danger in general.

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 184; *Wakefield*, p. 369.



*Pearce* considers the word sword as “an interpolation,” and would render the passage, “He that hath not (*a purse and scrip*) let him sell his garment and buy them.”\*

38. *It is enough*, that is, those are not the weapons that I alluded to; those, therefore, are now more than enow for any use that you will have of them.

The Catholics strangely suppose that by these *two swords*, are meant the spiritual and temporal power of the Popes, as the successors of Peter.

### PARAPHRASE.

*Luke* xxii. (31.) And the Lord said, Simon, I foresee that you will be brought into a very trying temptation, as if *Satan* (by which we express the principle of evil or sin) had desired to get possession of you, that he might sift and examine you, as men do corn in a sieve.†

*Matt.* xxvi. (26.) *This is my body.* This you are to consider as a representation and memorial of my body, which, like this bread, is shortly to be broken for you. (28.) This wine also, is a representation and memorial of my blood, which is shed in confirmation of that Gospel, in which the doctrines of repentance and forgiveness of sin will be preached to all nations. (29.) I shall not henceforth partake of any more entertainments with you, till I join with you in a much more delightful one in the kingdom of heaven.

### SECTION LXXIX.

*Jesus comforts his Disciples before his Death.*

*John* xiv. 1—31; *Matt.* xxvi. 30; *Mark* xiv. 26;  
*Luke* xxii. 39.

WE are now come to the discourses which Jesus held with the apostles in the near view of his separation from them by death. They shew the strong affection that he had for them. This seems for some time to have engrossed all his attention, excluding even the consideration of his own sufferings. What he suggests to them on this occasion was chiefly calculated to prevent their being *offended*, or their abandoning their faith and hope in him in a most trying situation, and for which they were not at all prepared; for their first attachment to Jesus was upon the idea of his being

\* *Com.* l. p. 437.

† See *Amos* ix. 9. (P.)

a king, and of their having preferment in his temporal court. Here, however, he apprizes them (as indeed he had frequently done before, but without their giving proper attention to it) of the sufferings that awaited them for his sake; but withal assures them of the extraordinary power with which they would be indued, and of the certainty of his second coming, to take them to himself, and have them with him for ever.

I cannot help observing here, how far the whole strain of these discourses of Jesus is from the language of one who was conscious that he was an impostor. We see here no trace of any design to impose upon the world, no measures to save himself from a violent death, or to deceive the world by the appearance of a resurrection, and no directions how to make any advantage of a scheme, which, upon the supposition of its being an imposture, could have no other object than this world. As to future reputation, from being the head of a great and flourishing sect, surely a death upon the cross could never have appeared to be the probable way to it.

Besides, nothing could have insured the existence and continuance of the scheme, but the consciousness of miraculous powers, which, upon the supposition of Jesus being an impostor, he must know that he was neither possessed of himself, nor could impart to others. Upon the whole, it seems to me to be absolutely impossible to peruse these discourses with any degree of attention, and retain the opinion of Jesus being an impostor. On the idea of his having a divine commission, and of his being conscious of it, every thing that he says, or does, upon the occasion, is natural and consistent; but upon any other supposition it is most unnatural and absurd.

*John* xiv. 2.\* Perhaps, with a learned friend of mine, we may understand the *mansions in his Father's house*, of which Jesus here speaks, to signify not places of rest and happiness in heaven, but *stations of trust and usefulness upon earth*,† such as he was then about to quit; such a place in the house or family of God as *Moses* is said, *Heb.* [iii. 5,] to have been *faithful in*.‡ The passage may then be para-

\* "If there were not, I would have told you that I go, to prepare them." *Erasmus, Luther, &c.* in *Bowyer*, p. 55. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 116, N. T. Ed. 2, I. pp. 401, 402.

† See *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 1—30, examined in *Theol. Repos.* V. pp. 355—365.

‡ "Dr. Benson thinks (*Life of Christ*, p. 207), that the apostles, who were long apt to take things in a gross, literal sense, seem to have looked upon God, the Father of Jesus, as some great man, grandee, or mighty monarch, who had a



phrased as follows:—In my father's house, or in his family on earth, are many stations of trust and honour, which require great activity and exertion. These, after my departure, you must occupy; and therefore you cannot follow me at present. I go to make room for you. But when you shall have discharged your duty here as I have done mine, I shall return again, and take you to myself, and then the separation which must take place between us at present will cease, and we shall be happy together for ever.

3. Nothing can be more evident than that it is the separation *after his ascension* of which our Lord speaks, in this and the following *chapters*, and not of his separation during the time of his death. Because, after the separation of which he speaks, he would return, and take them to himself for ever. He is nowhere said to be *with his Father*, but only *in the grave*, from the time of his death to his resurrection. It is equally plain that his promise to his disciples, *that they should be with him*, is limited to the time of his return from the Father to them, that is, the time of the general resurrection.

6. This may be understood to signify that no part of mankind will ever attain to the true knowledge of God but by means of the Gospel, and this has been abundantly verified in fact; as the apostle says, [1 Cor. i. 21,] “the world by *its own* wisdom knew not God.” How agreeable soever to the true light of nature is the doctrine of one God, infinitely wise, powerful and good, the Maker and constant Preserver of all things, the Inspector and the Judge of all men, it is a kind of knowledge that never was actually discovered by the light of nature, in any age or nation of the world.

10.\* How is it possible to read these words with any attention, and retain the idea of Christ having any extraordinary power, and much less any proper divinity, of his own, independent of what he received from the Father? In the language of Peter, [Acts ii. 22,] he was “a man ap-

splendid palace not far from Jerusalem. This supposition accounts very well for the questions that Philip and Thomas put to him, [vers. 5, 8,] but the notion is so gross, that I cannot persuade myself they could have entertained it; such very different and more sublime representations are given of the Deity in the Old Testament. It is possible, however, that they might imagine that God had prepared a palace for the Messiah in some part of the country, and might himself appear there as he did to Moses on Mount Sinai.” *Harm.* 1780, p. 213.

\* “‘I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me *speaketh*. He doth the works.’ The doctrine and the miracles are two different articles.” *Markland in Bowyer*, p. 55. “Rather, *and the Father*, &c., that is, he both spake my words, and does my works.” *Pearce*, l. p. 559.

proved of God by wonders and signs which God did by him," and with the same foreign power any other man might have done the same. What occasion, therefore, could there be for any other than a man, so assisted, to do all that our Saviour did?

12. *Greater works than these shall he do*; referring to the greater number of miracles that the apostles should work, and the greater number of converts that they would make after his ascension.\*

14.† It is evident that the requests here alluded to were to be made to God, and not to Christ: and though Christ is said to dispense these gifts, it could not be in a strict and proper sense; because the powers that were in Christ were not *his own*, but given him by the Father, as we are most expressly and repeatedly informed. How far Christ himself was instrumental in conveying miraculous powers to the apostles, we cannot tell. *The Comforter*, or *the Holy Spirit*, from which these powers are described as proceeding, is sometimes said to be sent by the Father, and sometimes by Christ; from the Father only in a proper sense, though it might be through Christ as a medium. Thus the Spirit of God is said to pass from Moses to the elders of Israel, but still it was the gift of God, and nothing that originated with Moses.

16. *Advocate*. The word παρακλητης,‡ which we have rendered *comforter*, Grotius supposes to signify more properly an *advocate*, or one who undertakes to plead the cause of the accused, and to act for them.

*For ever*, εις τον αιωνα, *for an age*, or *the age*, which may be supposed to be the term of their lives. Some restrict all these promises to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, when the αιων is supposed to end.

17. [*Whom the world cannot apprehend*,§] that is, *lay hold of*, and *take from you*, as has been done with respect to me.

20.|| Here the union of Christ with the Father is most clearly expressed to be no other than that which subsists

\* "Because I go to my Father, and will do whatever ye shall ask in my name, for glorifying the Father in the Son." Grotius in Bowyer, p. 55.

† Beza conjectures that "this verse came from the margin of some one; it being omitted by Chrysostom and Nonnus." See Bowyer, p. 55.

‡ "Mohammed signifying illustrious, Theodorus Abucara pretends that Christ foretold the appearance of that false prophet, by saying αλλων ΠΕΡΙΚΑΤΤΟΝ δώσει, and that it has here and elsewhere been altered. Wetstein and Toland, Nazarenus, p. 13." Ibid.

§ Harm. 1780, p. 211. See the Paraphrase, *infra*, p. 318.

|| "Rather, 'that I shall be in the Father.'" Pearce, l. p. 560.



between himself and his disciples, and between his disciples and God himself, they being all one together. It could not, therefore, be an union of nature, but of affection only. Notwithstanding this union, they remained perfectly distinct from each other, as much as any other persons whatever.

24. We have here another clear acknowledgment that whatever Christ taught, he had from God, and not from himself.

26. *In my name*, here signifies *in my place*.\* Jesus speaking in this figurative manner of the Spirit of God his Father, which had dwelt in him, and which would enable his apostles to work miracles after his death, has led many to imagine that it is *a real person*, distinct from God. But the apostles do not appear to have understood him in this manner. For *Paul* speaks [1 Cor. ii. 11] of the spirit of God as bearing the same relation to God that the spirit of man does to a man. But *the spirit of man* is certainly *a man*, and therefore *the spirit of God* must be *God*, that is, *the power of God*.

27. That is, I speak with more sincerity, and a more hearty good-will, than men of *the world* generally have when they use this phrase.

28.† Christ uniformly speaks of himself as *inferior to the Father*, just as an ambassador is inferior to him that sends him;‡ and there was a peculiar propriety in his making the observation in the circumstances in which he then was. It is the same that commonly occurs to pious persons when they die, and leave their children and friends in the hands of God, who, they naturally say, can take better care of them than they could do.

To suppose that Jesus spake of his human nature only, when he said that he was inferior to the Father, is to suppose that he meant to puzzle and mislead his hearers. By *himself*, certainly he meant *his whole self*, and not a part only. How absurd would it be for a man to say that he had no sense or understanding, meaning only that he had none in his hands or his feet! On the same strange principle also,

\* See *Theol. Repos.* I. p. 364; II. pp. 165—167. On *vers.* 16, 17, 26, see *Lardner*, XI. pp. 141—143, 267.

† “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice at my going to the Father.” N. T. 1729, I. p. 387. “Εἶπον [I said] is much better omitted, with some MSS. and the Eastern versions. It interrupts the argument.” Wakefield’s *Notes*, p. 117, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 402. See *Impr. Vers.* p. 256.

‡ “Divers of the ancients read, ‘The Father, who sent me, is greater than I.’ Bishop Pearson’s *Expos. of the Creed*, p. 36.” Pearce, I. p. 562.

Christ might have said that he should never die, or rise again, secretly meaning his divine nature only, which was not subject to death. To make this use of language can only be to puzzle and deceive; a design which certainly can never be ascribed to our Saviour.

This text was always understood to express a real superiority in the Father to the Son, even after the notion of the divinity of Christ had gained ground in the Christian Church. There was a long interval between the notion of Christ being God, in some low and qualified sense of the word, and that of his being God equal in power and glory to the Father. Such a great corruption of Christianity as this did not rise to its full height at once, but by very slow degrees.

31. Though I shall be apprehended, and be delivered up to the powers of this world, who will put me to death, it will not be on account of any guilt of mine, but to answer the great purposes of Divine Providence, in giving the most undeniable proof of my having had a commission from God, and of God having loved, honoured, and distinguished me on that account.

*Matt. xxvi. 30. Recited a hymn.* ὕμνησαντες means only to *recite* or *say*, at least it does not necessarily imply singing.\*

### PARAPHRASE.

*John xiv. (1.)* I foresee the consternation into which you will be thrown by my approaching death, and temporary separation from you: but be not overwhelmed with grief on this occasion. Believe in God, as the supreme Governor of the world, according to whose will every thing comes to pass, and believe that I am the Messiah, and therefore that I cannot fail to arrive to all the glory that is promised to him by God. *(2.)* And the glory which is designed for those that love and obey God is not confined to the Messiah himself; for in my Father's house there is room for great numbers besides me. I should otherwise have apprized you of it. At present I am only leaving you for a short time, in order to go and prepare a place for you there. *(3.)* When I shall have done this, I shall certainly return, and take you to myself; that from thenceforward we may never be separated again. *(4.)* Whither it is that I go, and the

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 184. (*P.*) *Wakefield*, p. 369.



way to the place, you cannot but know. (5.) Thomas says to him, Lord, we really do not know whither thou art going, and therefore we cannot possibly know the way. (6.) Jesus says, I am going to my Father, with whom is heavenly life and happiness; and I myself am sent by him to point out the true way to that eternal life. There is no other way than that which I teach.

(8.) Philip says to him, Shew us the Father, and we shall be satisfied. (9.) Jesus replies, Can I have been so long time with you, and you should not have known me? All that can be known of God is to be learned from those who bear his commission, which I do in a very extraordinary manner. (10.) For the Father himself speaks and acts by me in a more direct manner than he thought proper to do by any of the former prophets, insomuch that the very words that I speak are not to be considered as my own words, but as those of the Father speaking by me; and also the works that I do are in reality not mine, but his. (11.) If you do not believe my mere assertion of this, yet believe the works that I perform, which are of such a nature, as that they cannot be supposed to be performed by any other than supreme power. Yet, great as these works are, the same, and even greater, shall be performed by yourselves, who are my apostles; for the Gospel will be preached with much more success by you than it has been by me. The Gospel is to have an universal spread, and I do not continue here a sufficient time for that purpose. (13.) There is nothing so extraordinary, that shall be subservient to the propagation of the Gospel, that you shall ask of the Father in my name, but what will be granted to you. (14.) With respect to works of power, the assurance that I now give you has no restriction, or limitation, whatever.

(15.) I plainly perceive by your countenance and manner, the affection that you bear me, and the concern that you feel at the idea of my separation from you; but let your love to me be expressed not in useless sorrow, but in keeping my commandments. (16.) And to make you ample amends for my separation from you, I will pray the Father to send you what will be an abundant consolation to you during my absence, and what will abide with you for ever. (17.) I mean that divine spirit of truth, which has always accompanied myself, and it is what the powers of this world cannot seize upon, and force from you, as they have done with respect to me; because it is what the world is alto-

gether unacquainted with, and what is invisible to them; but it shall be intimately known to you, for it shall dwell with you, and in you.

(18.) Besides, you will have something more to lessen your affliction than even this consideration, for I myself shall return to you again, but in such a manner as I shall not return to the world. (19.) And this my coming to you again, after my resurrection, will be an assurance of a future and immortal life to yourselves. (20.) After this event you will be so enlightened with the spirit of truth, that you will have a perfect knowledge of the intimate union that subsists between me and my Father, and of us both with yourselves. (21.) He that keepeth my commandments, gives the best proof of his love and attachment to me, and this love will be amply returned both by my Father and myself.

(22.) Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but he that was the brother of James) says to him, How is it that thou wilt shew thyself to us, and not to the world? (taking it for granted that he was to be a temporal prince, and, therefore, could not be concealed, or unknown). (23.) Jesus replies, Consider again what I have just said, and you will perceive that I did not mean a corporeal and visible presence, even to yourselves. Whosoever loves me, and shall manifest that love by keeping my commandments, my Father himself will love him, and both of us will entertain the most sincere affection for him. It is this, my love and affection, that will ever accompany him, and it is a thing of much more value than my corporeal presence. (24.) They who love me not will be destitute of this advantage, and the favourable presence of God is of more value than all things else. *In thy presence*, says David, *is fulness of joy, thy favour is life, and thy loving-kindness better than life.* And that by keeping my commandments you will ensure this favourable presence of God with you, is evident, because my words are only his words, being those which I deliver in commission from him.

(25.) I am sensible, however, that what I say now will not be understood by you in its full extent. (26.) But when the Divine Spirit shall come, after my ascension, you will recollect what I have said, and will then be better able to understand it. (27.) I take leave of you by wishing you *peace*, using the same language as is customary with men; but I use it with more sincerity than they generally do. My peace, and favourable presence, will never leave you. Therefore let not your heart be troubled, and do not give way to fear. (28.) I have, indeed, told you, that I shall be



absent from you for a time ; but if you loved me, you would rather rejoice on this account, because I am going to my Father, who is infinitely my superior, and the source of all honour and happiness.

(29.) I have purposely forewarned you of this, that you may not be disconcerted at it, but, on the contrary, may rather have your faith increased on this account, because I have foretold what you will find to be true. (30.) From this time I shall not have much to say to you. The powers of this world will come, and put me to death, but not for any crime of which they will be able to convict me ; but my submission to death will convince the world how entirely resigned I am to the will of my Father, who requires this sacrifice of me. But it is now time to depart from this place.

### SECTION LXXX.

*Jesus compares himself to a Vine.*

*John xv. 1—27.*

**JOHN xv. 1.** This discourse was probably held with the apostles, in their way from the place where they had eaten the Passover to the garden in which he had his agony. It was then the time of full moon, and their way was along the Mount of Olives, which also abounded with *vines*. The sight of some of these trees, or their going through a vineyard, might suggest the leading sentiments of Jesus's address to his apostles at this time.

6.\* In this saying of our Saviour's the Papists have found their authority for *burning* heretics, in preference to putting them to any other kind of death. But had it been the intention of our Saviour that those who apostatized from the true faith of the gospel should actually be put to death, in any form, we should certainly have found some more express authority for it than this. On the contrary, nothing can be more opposite to the nature and spirit of Christianity than *violence* of any kind. That would be to make it *a kingdom of this world*, its duties being enforced by civil penalties, which are the sanctions of all civil laws.

10. It is impossible not to perceive every where how far Jesus was from assuming *equality with God*. The humblest

\* "*As a withered branch.*" "Un sarment qui se sèche." *Le Cene*, p. 649. See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 118, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 403; *Impr. Vers.* p. 257; *Bowyer*, p. 55; *Pearce*, l. p. 563.

of our race could not express a stronger sense of piety, and a more unreserved submission to the will of God, than he always did.

19. Here Jesus evidently speaks of his voluntary submission to death as the greatest instance of his love to mankind. But could he with truth have said this, if, from the love that he bore to the human race, he had condescended to leave a state of antecedent glory with God, had descended from so high a rank as that of the Creator of the world, and from being a purely spiritual being, have become incarnate? Not only are these circumstances not mentioned as the greatest proof of his love to men, but they are never so much as referred to at all, on any occasion in which his love to men, or their love to him, is mentioned. And surely a thing of such an extraordinary nature as this could not have been wholly overlooked, if it had been an instance of the love of Christ to us, and of course a just motive for our gratitude to him.

17. The apostles had shewed many instances of jealousy of each other. Nor can we wonder at this, when we consider that they expected to be rivals in their Master's esteem, and competitors for the chief honours of his temporal kingdom. He therefore takes every opportunity of repressing this spirit, and of inculcating the opposite temper of *mutual love*; forewarning them of the occasion they would have for it, when the world would hate and persecute them, so that their chief resource in this life would be in their sincere and ardent friendship for each other.

This peculiarly strong affection of Christians towards each other was always conspicuous in times of persecution, and from this source, together with their firm confidence in God, and their future glorious prospects, they have derived a satisfaction, even in this life, which has more than compensated for all their sufferings in it, so as to verify our Saviour's promise to them, [*Mark x. 30.*] that they should, *with persecution, receive an hundredfold more in this life, as well as in the world to come life everlasting.* This, at least, appears to have been the case in general, to those who have attended to the history of persecutions; though there must, no doubt, have been many exceptions. Those, however, who have suffered the most, have had many valuable consolations, and the less they have had of their reward here, the more will be reserved for them hereafter.

20. *If they have kept my sayings.* Ετηρησαν. This may be rendered, *if they have watched my words*, that is, with an



insidious and malicious design, *they will watch yours also*; \* and this rendering is perhaps more agreeable to the context.

26. Here this *spirit*, which is promised to the apostles, and which was to enable them to work miracles, is said to *proceed from the Father*, being, in reality, nothing more than the power or spirit of God the Father, the same power by which Christ himself had worked his miracles. Afterwards, when this spirit was thought to be a proper intelligent person, distinct from the Father or the Son, it was imagined that it derived its origin from the Father by way of *emanation* from him, and not in the manner of a proper *creation*. But because this spirit is likewise said to be sent by Christ, or to proceed from him, it was imagined that he must, in some way or other, proceed, or issue, from both the Father and the Son. Upon this idle question, the two great parts of the Christian Church, the Eastern and the Western, divided, and excommunicated one another; the Greek Church maintaining that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, and the Western, or Latin Church, that he proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Upon either of these *hypotheses*, we cannot wonder that they were puzzled to account for this spirit's *proceeding from the Father*, or from the Father and the Son, and yet being *equal* in eternity, power and glory, with each of them.

27. That is, as men, they were proper and unexceptionable *witnesses* of his whole conduct, of his discourses and his miracles, and especially of his resurrection from the dead.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* xv. (1.) That you may have a more distinct idea of what I mean concerning the intimate union that subsists between you and me, and of our common relation to my Father, of the great object and end of this union, and of the importance of it to yourselves, consider me as the vine, and my Father as the husbandman who attends to and cultivates this vine. (2.) Every branch belonging to me that beareth not fruit, he cuts off in pruning, and every branch that beareth fruit he cleanses, freeing it from every obstruction to its growth and fructification, that it may bring forth more fruit. (3.) At present you are thus cleansed, through the influence of my doctrine, and consequently are in a capacity

\* "S'ils ont épié mon discours, ils épieront aussi le vôtre." *Le Cene*, p. 524. "The first part of the following verse shews that the word is used here in a bad sense." *Pearce*, I. pp. 565, 566. See Wakefield's *Notes*, pp. 119, 120, N. T. Ed. 2, I. pp. 404, 405.

of bearing much fruit. (4.) See, therefore, that this union between us be carefully maintained ; for, as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remain in connexion with the vine, so neither can you bring forth the fruits of righteousness, but by the influence of my doctrine. (5.) Now remember that I am the vine, and that you are the branches ; so that, by adhering to my doctrine, by which your connexion with me is preserved, you will bear fruit, but that otherwise you will do nothing. (6.) Besides, the consequences of abandoning your relationship to me, or giving up the profession of the gospel, is truly alarming. Any person in this situation is in the condition of a branch that is cut from the vine by pruning ; and all such branches, not being fit to be put to any other use, men gather into bundles, and burn them. (7.) But the consequence of your union with me will be most glorious and happy. You will then bear the same relation to my Father that I myself do, and as he always hears me, so you also will never pray to him in vain. (8.) In fact, my Father will consider himself as honoured by your obedience to his will, and distinguishing yourselves by a life of virtue and goodness, which is the great object and end of your becoming my disciples.

(9.) To drop the allusion to the vine, consider yourselves as bearing the same relation to me that I do to my Father : for as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you ; and it is my most earnest desire, that you would continue the proper objects of my love, as I do of my Father's love. (10.) This you will be sure to do by adhering to my doctrine, and keeping my commandments ; for it is by the same means that I secure my Father's affection to me ; for it is only by keeping his commandments that I continue to be the object of his love. (11.) I give you these views of the nature and importance of your union with me, that, in the present dejected state of your minds, you may still preserve something of that inward joy and satisfaction which has never wholly deserted me, and will not desert me entirely, even in my approaching sufferings, and that nothing may prevent this joy from rising to its proper height.

(12.) There is another important instruction which results both from the consideration of your union with me, as branches to a vine, and of the equal love that I bear to you, which is, that you love one another as I have loved you ; and this you must consider as my earnest injunction and command. (13.) To judge of the greatness of the love that I bear to you, and what you ought to bear one another, con-



sider the proof that I am about to give you of it, which is the greatest that any man can give to his friends, viz. to lay down my life for you. (14.) Now I shall consider myself as bound to you in this most sacred tie of perfect friendship, so long as you do whatever I command you. (15.) For though I use this language, which you may think most suited to the character of a master, it is plain that I consider you not as slaves, but as friends ; because no slave, or even servant, is indulged in that intimate familiarity, and unreserved communication, in which I have indulged you ; for I have concealed nothing from you of what my Father has communicated to me.

(16.) You must allow it to be a proof of my superior affection to you, that it was not you, who of your own accord attached yourselves to me, in the manner in which you now do ; but it was the consequence of my particularly calling and singling you out to become my immediate followers and apostles. I did it for the important purpose of your distinguishing yourselves as preachers of righteousness to all the world, and by your holy and exemplary lives to give you the same interest with my Father that I myself have, so that whatever you ask of him, he may always give it to you. (17.) This consideration should give my exhortations the more weight with you, and I repeat it again as my most express command, that you sincerely love one another. (18.) And let this love that you bear to one another make you amends for the hatred that you must expect the world will bear you. Consider, also, that, in consequence of your strict union with me, you cannot expect any other than the same treatment that I myself have met with ; and you know that the world has hated me before it hated you ; and this, with respect to us both, is no more than might have been expected from the difference of our interests and pursuits. (19.) If you were of the world, and resembled the men of the world in your principles and pursuits, you would have stood the same chance for popular applause and favour that others have. But because in this sense you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

(20.) Remember, also, what I said to you on a former occasion, viz. that the servant is not greater than his master. If, therefore, they have persecuted me, you cannot expect more favour at their hands. They will certainly, for the very same reason, persecute you also ; and you cannot expect that the world in general will be persuaded and governed

by you any more than they have been by me. (21.) Indeed all the ill-treatment that you will meet with from the world is only on account of your relation to me; and the foundation of the whole is a general ignorance concerning God, and of his real designs in my mission.

(22.) The sins of the Jews, our present persecutors, have been greatly aggravated by my personal intercourse with them. Without this they would comparatively have had no sin, but now their conduct will admit of no apology. (23.) For the hatred they have shewn to me proceeds from such a malignant disposition of mind, as may be deemed a hatred and opposition to my Father himself. (24.) The miraculous works that I have performed are so evidently done by the power of God himself, that they may be said to have seen, and to have hated him, as well as myself. (25.) But this is another instance in which the ancient prophecies concerning me, and my reception in the world, are fulfilled; for it is written (*Ps. xxxv. 19*) concerning *David* immediately, but what is much more eminently true of myself, *They hated me without a cause.*

(26.) But besides this evidence of my divine mission, which results from my own miraculous works, I shall also have another witness in the Holy Spirit, which I shall send to you from the Father: for the works that you will be enabled to perform by that spirit will be a farther attestation of my mission. (27.) And you yourselves also, in your proper characters, as men, and as credible witnesses of what you have heard and seen, will strengthen this evidence by your own direct testimony; because you have been with me from the beginning, and therefore are fully acquainted with my doctrine and miracles.

## SECTION LXXXI.

### *The Promise of the Holy Spirit.*

*John xvi. 1—33.*

THIS chapter contains a continuation of the discourse that Jesus held with his apostles as they went from Jerusalem to the garden of *Gethsemane*. It is well calculated to prepare them for his separation from them; giving them some idea of the hardships to which they would be exposed, and of the noble recompence that was reserved for them. That this was the great object of Jesus in the whole of this



address, appears from the conclusion of it, *ver.* 53: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

2.\* How unlike is this to the language of an impostor, who could not have expected any followers but from the hope of wealth, power, and distinction in this world! Least of all could he have any other prospect from *Jews*, who expected a *Messiah*, who would be a prince, and who would give them wealth and power, and not one in whose cause they were to suffer and die.

4. There was, therefore, nothing particularly discouraging in their case, and whatever might have occurred, he himself was at hand to advise and comfort them.

7. While Jesus continued with his disciples, that divine power, by which his mission was confirmed, resided with *him*, though it was occasionally imparted to the apostles. When he should be removed from them, that power would remain with them, and thereby give them the fullest conviction of his divine mission, and of theirs in connexion with it. This power is figuratively spoken of as a *person*, because, with respect to the apostles, it was to come in the place of Jesus, who was a proper person, and to be the same to them that he had been. But, divested of figure, *the spirit of God* always means *the power of God*, or *God himself*, whose power it is, just as *the spirit of a man* is a *man*, and nothing foreign to him.†

8—11. There is much obscurity in these verses. I shall endeavour to explain them in the paraphrase.‡

13.§ It is evident that at the death of Jesus the apostles were very ignorant of many things relating to his kingdom, and their prejudices prevented them from understanding what he said to them on that subject. During his death they were in a state of utter consternation; but after his resurrection they expected, as before, that he would *restore the kingdom to Israel*. His ascension, and the descent of the spirit upon themselves, removed all their prejudices, but not perhaps by any direct instructions that were given them; but their mistaken ideas would be corrected of course, by the *facts*, by reflecting on what Jesus had said to them, and by comparing one thing with another. Seeing their

\* "Rather, 'will put you out of their synagogues, (yea, the time is coming,) that whosoever killeth you, may think that,' " &c. *Pearce*, I. p. 567.

† See *supra*, p. 316.

‡ See *Lardner*, XI. pp. 148—150.

§ See *ibid.* XI. p. 266.

Master actually removed from the world, they must clearly see, without any information, that he was not to reign here.

The ancient Christian writers, who were advocates for the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, always said that these were the doctrines which the apostles were not then prepared to receive; for, that having expected a mere man for their Messiah, such sublime tenets as these would have shocked all their prejudices. They supposed, therefore, that he was considered in no higher character than that of an eminent prophet, till the descent of the spirit upon the day of Pentecost; and also that, though from that time the apostles were acquainted with the true character of their Master, they did not think proper to divulge the secret to many others, lest they should offend the same prejudices by which themselves had been influenced. In consequence of this, they always said that these doctrines were never taught with clearness and effect, till the publication of the Gospel of John, which they supposed to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem. In the mean time, they acknowledge that the simple *Unitarian doctrine* was taught to all the Christian world.

On these principles they endeavour to account for its general prevalence in the early ages, and for its continuance till their own times. But nothing can be conceived more improbable than that the apostles should have acted such a part as this. It was utterly unsuitable to the simplicity of their characters, nor does the fact at all correspond to this *hypothesis*; for the publication of John's Gospel made no change whatever in the sentiments of Christians on this subject; and all the Christian world were simply Unitarians, knowing nothing of the pre-existence or divinity of Christ till long after this time, when those doctrines came in from the *Platonic philosophy*.

15. *Mine*, that is, by the gift of God the Father, as he elsewhere says, "All things are given unto me of my Father;" and again, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He was far from claiming any thing as *of himself*, and not given to him by God, whatever others have injudiciously asserted for him.

19. This *little while* which our Lord speaks of, comprehends the whole time between his departure from his apostles after his ascension, and his coming again to judge the world and receive them to himself. The exact time of this greatest of all events, Jesus himself says he was not acquainted with,



but he might call it *a little time*, in order to express the *certainty* of it. And though the interval be, with respect to the term of human life, a long one, yet in the eye of God, and with respect to the whole of our own existence, it is very short, and to each individual will appear to be so; for as we shall be insensible of the time that elapses while we are at rest in the grave, it will seem to us as if we shut our eyes on this world, and immediately opened them at the general resurrection, a most awful and alarming consideration.

23. We see here that Christ is not to be the object of worship or prayer in any respect, notwithstanding any thing he may have to do in the government of the church, from the time of his ascension into heaven to his second coming, concerning which we are entirely ignorant.\*

26. *I say unto you that I shall not pray the Father for you.*†

27. This may satisfy us that what some have supposed concerning *the intercession of Christ* with God for us is needless. We are to address our prayers to God himself immediately; and his affection for us is such as will always induce him to grant whatever is proper for us, without the intercession, or mediation, of any being whatever for us. We have nothing to do but to render ourselves the proper objects of his favour.

28. By *the world*, in this place, we are to understand not the material world, consisting of land and water, but the public theatre of usefulness, a public character and station, and consequently a scene of activity and trial. We cannot, therefore, infer from this language, that Jesus existed before he made his appearance in what is called the world. This is sufficiently explained by what he himself says in the next chapter, *ver.* 18, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world;"‡ for certainly the apostles had not existed before they came into the world. But at the time that Jesus was speaking, they were not in the world in the sense in which he used the term, but were to go into it afterwards, when he should leave it; that is, they were to succeed to that scene of great activity and public service which he was to quit.

\* See *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 28, 71—73.

† *Theol. Repos.* IV. pp. 345—348. (*P.*) See *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 73, 74. "This means not, that he would not pray for his apostles;—but only that he had no need to pray for them, they being *loved of God*, and therefore being sure to be heard by him." *Pearce*, I. p. 570.

‡ See *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 394, 395.

## PARAPHRASE.

*John* xvi. (1.) These things, respecting my own sufferings and yours, as related to me, I have now informed you of, that you may not be surprised and offended when they shall come to pass. (2.) You will not only be expelled from synagogues, as persons unworthy the society of men of virtue and religion, but you will even be put to death, as unworthy of living in human society; and they who treat you in this manner will think that thereby they are doing God service. (3.) And this they will do from their ignorance of the character and designs of God, and of my mission from him.

(4.) These things I forewarn you of, that when the sufferings which I now predict shall actually take place, you may remember what I now say, in order to comfort you, and enable you to bear them. But I did not tell you of those things when you first became my followers, because while I live, it is I, and not you, who are the objects of popular resentment. (5.) But now that I am going to leave you, when you must yourselves stand forth in the same cause, it becomes absolutely necessary that I give you this notice.

(6.) But though I talk to you in this manner about my departure from you, you express no desire to know whither it is that I am going, though you seem to be exceedingly concerned and dejected at the thought of my being separated from you. (7.) Be assured, however, that it is for your own advantage that I leave you; for if I do not leave you, the Holy Spirit, of whom I have told you that he will supply my place, and that he will be your advocate and assistant during my absence, will not come to you; and I go in order to send him to you.

(8.) Now when he is come, he will act the part of an advocate, as in a court of justice, and will arraign the world which has rejected me on three heads of accusation, viz. of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (9.) He will prove by the miraculous works which he will enable you to perform, that the Jews have been guilty of a very great sin in rejecting me, in whose name the miracles wrought by you will be performed. (10.) He will convince the world of my innocence and righteousness, as having the seal of divine approbation in my resurrection and ascension into heaven. (11.) It will also appear that, besides being simply approved by God, I shall be constituted universal judge,



and shall accordingly execute justice, and inflict the most exemplary punishment upon those powers of the world that were guilty of my death.

(12.) There are many more things that I have to communicate to you, but your minds are not yet prepared to receive them, on account of your prejudices and misapprehensions.

(13.) But the divine spirit, with which you will be inspired, will enlighten your minds farther, and inform you of all things that will be necessary for you to know; for what he will communicate to you will be by commission from my Father and me, and not from himself: and he will not only explain to you what you would not otherwise have been able to understand, if I should tell them to you in person at present, but he will likewise enable you to foretell future events, as an evidence of his being the spirit of the true God, who alone can look with certainty into the events of future time.

(14.) As my ambassador and substitute, every thing that he does will tend to honour me; for what he delivers to you will be the things that belong to me. (15.) It is true that, as strictly speaking, this advocate is no other than the Spirit of God, the things that he will communicate to you will be the things of God my Father; but, nevertheless, they may be said to be mine, because every thing that relates to the kingdom of God in the world, which purpose only this extraordinary effusion of the Spirit is to subserve, is committed to my direction and superintendence.

(16.) I must again assure you for your consolation, that my separation from you is but for a time. It may even be called a short time; and when that short time shall be expired, I shall return to you, and during my separation from you I shall be with my Father. (17—19.) His disciples not clearly understanding what he meant, and not caring to question him much farther about his meaning, Jesus perceived it, and said, (20.) The time that I refer to will be a season of sorrow to you, and of joy to the world, our enemies; but your sorrow will be soon turned into joy, when we meet never to be parted any more; (21) so that your sorrows will resemble the pains of childbearing, which are immediately succeeded by a joy which is more than a recompence for them. (22.) Though, therefore, you be sorrowful now, you will rejoice when I return to you, and that joy will have no farther interruption.

(23.) During my separation from you, you cannot have recourse to me, as you now have, upon every emergency;

but you will suffer no inconvenience on that account, for whatever you ask of the Father, instead of applying to me, he will give it to you. (24.) Hitherto you have not applied to the Father in your difficulties, but whenever you do it, your requests will be favourably heard, and your joy and satisfaction on that account will be very great. (25.) At present I speak to you in proverbs, using expressions which have necessarily a degree of obscurity attending them; but the time is at hand, when, by means of the spirit of truth which I have promised you, I shall discover to you in a plainer manner the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

(26.) At that day you will apply to the Father as my disciples, and there will be no occasion to pray to him for you. You must, therefore, address yourselves to God immediately. (27.) For it is not I only, but God himself who loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed in my mission from him. (28.) It is my Father who, at the commencement of my public ministry, gave me my commission, and sent me into the world, into this state of activity, trial and temptation, and having now finished the work which he gave me to do, I am about to leave the world and go to him.

(29.) The disciples, who perceived that he spake with a reference to the doubts and difficulties which they had in their own minds, but which they had not directly mentioned to him, being struck with this circumstance, replied, Now thou speakest plainly enough, without any obscurity. (30.) We are sure that thou knowest all things, and hast no need that we should mention our doubts and difficulties to thee. By this we know that thou must be a prophet from God, and the promised Messiah.

(31.) Jesus said, *Do you now believe?* (32.) Your faith will soon be put to a severer trial than you expect; and in this trial I foresee that you will all abandon me, and leave me alone, as far as it is in your power to leave me alone; for the Father is always with me, and inseparable from me. (33.) The purport of the whole of this discourse is, that notwithstanding all the trials and sufferings to which you may be exposed in the world, yet, depending upon my promises and encouragements, you may enjoy peace and satisfaction in your own minds: and as to the tribulation which you may meet with in and from the world, be not concerned at it. I have gone before you, have encountered the same



difficulties and sufferings, and have overcome them. This consideration will make it easier for you to rise superior to them also.

## SECTION LXXXII.

*Jesus prays for his Disciples.*

*John xvii. 1—26.*

IN the course of our Saviour's history we have seen many examples of his piety. He ever bore in mind that he came *not to do his own will, but the will of his Father who sent him, and to finish his work*; and his submission to the will of his Father, even in the greatest trials, was perfect and most exemplary. We have here, however, the most solemn act of his devotion of which we have any account. It was delivered in the hearing of his apostles, and had the same object with the discourses preceding it, viz. to strengthen their faith and hope in him, notwithstanding the severe trials to which they would soon be exposed. He expresses his own confidence in the Divine favour, and the happiness intended in the Divine councils for himself and all his faithful followers.

In the course of this prayer we shall see many instances, not only of Jesus regarding the Father as the only true God, and of course the only proper object of worship, but of his considering his disciples as standing in the same relation to God with himself. As he was *the Son of God*, so all Christians are likewise called *sons of God*, and in the most figurative language, *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus*, who may therefore be called *our elder brother*, entitled to some particular privileges, but of the same nature with ourselves, so that all the difference between us is in degree only, and not in kind.

*John xvii. 1.* In this prayer we perceive a great resemblance to what was to be performed by the high-priest of the Jews at the great day of atonement, when he was to make atonement first for himself, then for the priests, and after that for the people, *Lev. xvi. 6—17*. So our Lord here prays first for himself, then for his apostles, and lastly for the whole church, and Christians of every succeeding age.

3.\* How plainly here is the Father distinguished as *the*

\* "Jesus, the Christ, whom thou hast sent." *Harm.* 1780, p. 221; *Pearce*, I. p. 572.

*only true God*,\* and not a Trinity of persons, comprehending the Son and the Holy Spirit, as well as the Father! The words *Jesus Christ* in this verse are thought to be an early interpolation, as Jesus would hardly mention his own name in this prayer. It is a thing that was never done by him on any other occasion, and must have been unnatural.

5. This *glory* must mean that which Christ had in the Divine councils only, before the foundation of the world, which is agreeable to the usual phraseology of Scripture.† If every phrase of this kind be interpreted literally, it must be maintained, not only that Christ *existed*, but also that he was *crucified*, before the foundation of the world; for he is called, *Rev.* xiii. 8, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” We ourselves must also have pre-existed, as well as Christ, for Christians are said, *Ephes.* i. 4, to be “chosen in *Christ* before the foundation of the world.” Besides, what propriety could there be in Christ praying, as the reward of his sufferings, for the same state of glory that he had enjoyed *before* them? This would be to make it no reward at all, whereas he now, very naturally, asks for that reward which had been promised to him when he should have fulfilled the conditions on which the promise was made.

8. Having said before in general, that he had finished the work which God had given him to do, he here specifies what that work was, viz. to convince his disciples of his divine mission, and to preserve them in the practice of virtue.

9. *I pray not for the world*, that is, not at this time. But indeed this very prayer does in reality respect the whole world, as its conversion and salvation by the ministry of the apostles, and their successors, in preaching the gospel, which was the great object of his mission, is alluded to in it.‡

11, 12. § Here Jesus, in effect, prays for the descent of the Spirit to take his place, and to do for his disciples what he had done for them while he was with them; and this was evidently no other than the power of God the Father himself, and not a person distinct from him; for nothing

\* See *Hallett*, I. pp. 14, 15; *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 77, 78.

† “The glory which had been always, and from the beginning, designed for me.” *Lardner*, X. p. 617. See *ibid.* XI. p. 91; *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 73, 74; III. pp. 146, 147, 268; the Author, *ibid.* p. 348; *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 24, (*Note*,) 410, 412—414; *Wakefield's Notes*, pp. 121, 122, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 406; *Impr. Vers.* p. 261.

‡ See *Theol. Repos.* II. pp. 466, 467; III. pp. 127—129.

§ “The son of mischief.” *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 122, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 407.



else can be the proper interpretation of his language here, "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," that is, keep them by thy own immediate power.

13. Instead of *my joy*, Mr. Wakefield renders it, *their joy in me*.\*

18. We see here, as I have observed before, what is the meaning of the term *world*, as denoting the place into which Christ was *sent*. It was not the material world, but the world in a figurative, though by no means an uncommon, sense, as a scene of trial and activity.† In this sense the apostles were not at that time *sent into the world*, though they were then living, and therefore, in the literal sense, in the world, as well as Jesus himself.

21, 22. What can be more evident from this passage, than that Christ is *one* with the Father in no other sense than that in which all his disciples are *one* with them both, that is, one by affection and interest, and by no means in nature?

*That the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and that the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.*‡

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* xvii. (1.) When Jesus had said what he thought proper to his disciples, he directed his eyes upwards, and in their hearing, addressed his heavenly Father in the following manner: Father, the time of the completion of my public ministry here below is now at hand. I therefore pray that thou wouldst advance me from a state of humiliation and sufferings, to a state of glory and happiness, that I may still carry on thy great and gracious designs in that state, as I have done in this; (2) and that, as I have here delivered unto men the precepts and doctrines which thou gavest me, to engage them in the practice of virtue, and obedience to thy will, I may there be enabled to confer upon them those rewards which it is thy good pleasure that they should receive, and which is the great object and end of the powers with which thou hast entrusted me, viz. to give eternal life to all those whom thou, in thy wise providence, hast thought

\* *Wakefield*. (P.) See W.'s *Notes*, p. 122, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 407. "That their joy in me may be complete." N. T. 1729, I. p. 395.

† See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 394.

‡ *Markland*. (P.) "That glory which was to be manifested by their working of miracles." *Pearce*, I. p. 574.

proper should become my disciples. (3.) And the greatest advantage which they would enjoy in this eternal life and happiness, as well as the only necessary means to qualify them for it, is the just knowledge of thee, as the only living and true God, and of myself as the Messiah, with sentiments and conduct suited to that knowledge.

(4.) Since now, O Father, I have promoted thy glory *on earth*, and have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, (5.) exalt me, I intreat thee, to thy right hand, which is the state of glory that thou hadst appointed for me *before the world was*. (6.) I have communicated thy will to all those whom thou hast given to be my disciples, and they have kept it. (7.) They are satisfied that all the power that I now exercise has been given to me by thee, (8) and they have received the instructions that I have given them as thine, and they are fully convinced of my mission from thee. (9.) It is for my disciples only, and not *for the world* at large, that I now pray. It is for those who are in a more especial manner thy own. (10.) For it is thy pleasure that as every thing that is mine comes from thee, so all that is thine, respecting the kingdom of truth and righteousness on earth, should be mine, and at my disposal. And this is the greatest honour that I could receive.

(11.) I am now coming to thee, and to leave them exposed to all the snares and dangers of the world; do thou thyself vouchsafe to undertake the care of them whom thou hast given me, that they may continue united to us in the same bond of affection with which thou, O Father, and myself, are united. (12.) *While I was with them in the world, I kept them* in their duty to thee; even all that thou gavest to be my followers, except one reprobate; and it was necessary for the fulfilment of the Scriptures that one of them should be a traitor.

(13.) Now that I am about to leave the world, I address myself to thee in this manner, in their hearing, that I may inspire them with that inward joy and satisfaction that I myself have always experienced. (14.) I am the more concerned for their safety, as, in consequence of my having instructed them in thy will, the world has become alienated from them; for, indeed, their views and expectations are not from this world, any more than my own have been.

(15.) I do not pray that they may follow me immediately, and that thou wouldst at this time take them out of this world, but that thou wouldst keep them out of the evil to



which they are exposed in it, (16,) even from those temptations and trials to which they will necessarily be exposed, in consequence of their not being conformed to the manners and vices of the world any more than myself. (17.) May their minds be thoroughly seasoned and fortified by a firm belief of the great truths which they are to teach to others, and be thus consecrated and set apart for the office of the apostleship.

(18.) For as thou hast sent me into the world, so do I send them on the same mission. (19.) For my mission is only introductory to theirs; and it is *for their sakes*, and with a view to their future services, chiefly, that I have devoted myself to the work of preaching the gospel.

(20.) Neither do I now pray for these my apostles only, who are now present with me, but for all that shall be converted to the Christian religion through their preaching, even all those who, to the end of the world, shall become my disciples. (21.) That they may all form one connected, compact body, by an union as intimate as that which subsists between thee and me, that they all may be one with us, and that the whole world, seeing the good effects of this divine harmony, may be convinced of my divine mission.

(22.) As they are one with me in affection and design, I am also desirous that they should share with me in the glory which thou givest me; that in this respect also they may be one with us, as thou and myself art one; (23) I being considered as dwelling *in them, and thou in me*, that their union with us may be completed, and that all the world may be convinced *that thou hast sent me*, and that thou wilt love and honour them, even as thou hast loved and honoured me.

(24.) It is my final wish, that all my faithful followers may enjoy my presence hereafter, and may behold and share in the glory which thou givest me, and which thou hast designed for me *from the foundation of the world*. (25.) In this, O Father, thou wilt shew thyself to be just and righteous, in distinguishing by thy special favour myself and them who know and acknowledge thee, and have devoted ourselves wholly to thy will, while the world at large has been alienated from thee. (26.) And the reason why I have inculcated upon them the true knowledge of thee, and entire obedience to thee, and that I shall still continue to do so by the Holy Spirit, after my resurrection, has been

that they may partake of the love wherewith thou hast loved me, and be considered by thee as if I myself was in and with them.

### SECTION LXXXIII.

*The Agony in the Garden, and the apprehending of Jesus.*

*Matt.* xxvi. 36—56; *Mark* xiv. 32—52; *Luke* xxii. 40—53;  
*John* xviii. 1—11.

**JOHN** xviii. 1. Jesus having delivered that affectionate prayer of which we have an account in the Gospel of *John*, who, as well as the rest of the apostles, was present on the occasion, crossed *the brook Cedron*, which separated Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, to go to *a garden*, which was the scene of the following most interesting transaction.

*Matt.* xxvi. 36.\* This was probably a garden belonging to some friend of Jesus, into which he had leave to enter whenever he pleased.

37. *Peter, James and John*, had attended Jesus when he raised the daughter of *Jairus*, and also on the Mount of Transfiguration; so that the same persons here saw him in a state of the lowest humiliation, who had before seen a specimen of his future glory.

The words † in the original express the greatest possible dejection and consternation of mind. It may seem extraordinary that Jesus, who afterwards bore his sufferings with so much composure, should be so exceedingly affected by the idea of them only. But it is no uncommon thing, when we have a clear idea of any future pains, to imagine them to be greater and more intolerable than we afterwards find them to be, death itself, in any form, I believe not excepted. Many persons, for example, bear the amputation of a limb with a good deal of courage, who have passed many a sleepless hour of the night in thinking of the operation beforehand.

Besides, the case of Jesus was peculiar. He not only knew that he must die a violent death in general, but like-

\* "*Gethsemane*, that is, the oil-press. It was a part of the Mount of Olives, ver. 30." *Pearce*. *Sit*, rather "*stay here*, without any view to the posture." *Wakefield*, p. 373.

† *Sorrowful and very heavy*, or rather "*very anxious*, or *full of anguish*. The context here, and *Philipp.* ii. 26, where the word is again used, shew this, or something equivalent, to be the true meaning." *Ibid.*



wise all the circumstances attending it, which would make his idea of it much more distinct, vivid and affecting. If a man should only know that he was to die in battle, for example, his idea of his death being general and indistinct, would not impress his mind so much as if he had a previous knowledge of every wound that he should receive, and the time that he was to languish under the painful effects of them.

Now, it might be of great consequence that Jesus should have had a distinct idea of his future sufferings. This circumstance both argued his greater resignation to the will of God in submitting to them, and would likewise tend to give him the fullest conviction, when he saw every particular event in the course of his sufferings exactly answering the idea that had been given him of them, that the great catastrophe, viz. his rising from the dead, and his future glory, would be the certain issue of the whole, and therefore would tend to encourage rather than discourage him.

38. *Luke* xxii. 44, says, "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." But it does not follow that he considered the drops of sweat as actually consisting of blood, but only as large and visible as drops of blood would be. There are, however, several examples of persons actually sweating blood through great terror of mind;\* and therefore I rather think that this was the case with Jesus. And it is a proof both of the most exquisite sensibility of his mind, and of his entire resignation to the will of God. Notwithstanding his natural excessive dread of death and torture, he could still say, [*Luke* xxii. 42,] "Not my will, but thine be done."

39. *This cup*; meaning his approaching sufferings.† He felt as a man, but immediately submitted his will to the will of God; "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

We cannot suppose that Jesus really expected, or wished to be excused from his approaching sufferings. Though the

\* See *Theol. Repos.* III. p. 376. (P.) Pearce (on *Luke* xxii. 44), I. p. 438.

Dr. Mead remarks "This passage is generally understood, as if the Saviour of mankind had sweated real blood. But the text does not say so much. The sweat was only ὡς αἵματι ῥοιπαίαι αἱματός, as it were, or like drops of blood; that is, the drops of sweat were so large, thick and viscid, that they trickled to the ground like drops of blood. Thus were the words understood by Justin Martyr, Theophylactus and Euthymius; and yet Galen (*Lib. de Utilitate Respirationis*) has observed, that it sometimes happens, that the pores are so vastly dilated by a copious and fervid spirit, that even blood issues through them, and constitutes a bloody sweat." *Med. Sacr.* (Ch. xiii.) pp. 106, 107.

† See *Heb.* v. 7; *Lardner* (on "the Greatness of Jesus in his last Sufferings"), X. pp. 335—338; *Le Cene*, pp. 276—278; *Essay*, 1727, p. 286; *Wakefield*, pp. 373, 374; *W.'s Notes*, p. 22, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 310.

form of the expression be different, yet what he says here amounts to nothing more than he had said on a former occasion, a day or two before, when he was likewise much oppressed with the prospect of them. "Now," says he, (*John* xii. 27, 28,) "is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify thy name." The state of his mind was evidently the same, on both these occasions.

40.\* *Luke* [xxii. 45] says that they *slept through sorrow*, and on the mount of transfiguration they slept through *astonishment*. This was quite natural: for after any great exertion, occasioned by terror or anxiety, the mind will have rest. We read of persons in long and extreme torture having momentary intervals of sound sleep.

41.† There is great tenderness in this reproof, especially considering the anxiety of Jesus's own mind, and his want of sufficient sympathy from his friends; and this makes it the more probable that their sleep was not the effect of natural drowsiness, but was brought on by uncommon exertion of mind and strong feelings, though not equal to his own, which, no doubt, would have prevented sleep.

*Mark* xiv. 41.‡ For *it is enough*, read *it is done*, or *is over*.§

*Matt.* xxvi. 42—44.|| It has been imagined by some, that this agony of Jesus in the garden was occasioned by Jesus then bearing the punishment due to the sins of men. But the evangelists say nothing about any such thing. So far was Christ from being the object of divine *wrath*, or a proper subject of *punishment*, that he must have been the object of his peculiar complaisance in his patient submission to his will. His agony, great as it was, is sufficiently accounted for by the near view of his approaching painful and ignominious death.

49. *Kissed him*. The word *καταφίλω*, signifies to kiss with ardour and affection.¶

\* *Unto Peter*; "Our Lord addresses him in particular, because of his late professions of *steadiness* and *adherence*, with a fine and delicate reproof." *Wakefield*, p. 375.

† "*The Spirit*; what Paul calls *the inner man*, and the mind. *Rom.* vii. 22, 23." *Ibid.*

‡ "Do ye still sleep and take your rest?" *Harm.* 1780, p. 225. "Dormez vous maintenant, et vous reposez vous encore?" *Le Cene*, p. 467. See *Bowyer*, p. 28, and on *Matt.* xxvi. 45, *ibid.* p. 15; and *Wakefield*, p. 376.

§ See *N. T.* 1729, I. p. 183; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 44, *N. T. Ed.* 2, I. p. 331.

|| See *Wakefield*, pp. 375, 376.

¶ See *ibid.* p. 377; *W.'s Notes*, p. 22, *N. T. Ed.* 2, I. p. 311.



*John* xviii. 6. Perhaps impressed with extraordinary terror. The whole shews that Jesus might easily have made his escape if he had been disposed to do it.

*Matt.* xxvi. 52. *They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.\** This prophecy seems to have been verified whenever Christians have had recourse to arms, in order to defend themselves from persecution; as in the case of the *Hussites*, in Bohemia, and the *Huguenots*, in France.

*John* xviii. 11. Other accounts say that Jesus healed the servant's ear, which shews his perfect composure, and how far he was from entertaining any thoughts of revenge.

*Luke* xxii. 51. *Touched his ear.* *Pearce*† thinks it not probable that our Lord should have wrought a miracle on this occasion, and there is no mention of it\* in the other evangelists, who speak of the cutting off of the ear.

*Suffer ye thus far.* *Pearce* would render it, "*Suffer* (me to go) *as far as to this man, or this place*; that is, to go up to the wounded man and to heal him."‡

*Mark* xiv. 51. *A certain young man.*§ Probably some person who lived near the garden, and was awakened by the tumult. Whether he was a friend of Jesus, or not, does not appear. But it looks as if those who seized Jesus had had orders to seize his followers, and this person might have been taken for one of them. This accounts for the dispersion of the disciples; and probably they were saved by the interposition of Jesus in their favour, when he said, [*John* xviii. 8,] "*If ye seek me, let these go their way.*" The *manner* in which he spake these words might enforce their obedience.

It is customary in the East, says Dr. Shaw, to wear a kind of blanket, called a *hyke*, wrapped about them, which is all that many persons wear by day and sleep in at night. In summer they have them of cotton, or linen. To run

\* "*Rather by the sword.*—Wars commonly end in the death of those who deal in them." *Pearce*, I. p. 187.

† The latter part of this verse seems to be proverbial, and to mean in general, that, 'they who countenance schemes of violence, and engage in war and bloodshed, pursue a conduct which has a natural tendency to hasten their own destruction.'—They, whose hands are against every man, will have every man's hand against them.

- - - - - Neque enim lex æquior ulla,  
Quàm necis artifices arte perire suâ."

*Wakefield*, p. 378.

‡ *Com.* I. p. 439.

§ *Ibid.* See another sense in *N. T.* 1729, I. p. 307; *Bowyer*, p. 45; *Wakefield's Notes*, pp. 80, 81, *N. T.* Ed. 2, I. pp. 367, 368.

§ See *Le Clerc*, *N. T.* p. 163; *Lardner*, VI. p. 103.

away quite *naked*, as this young man seems to have done, argues extreme fear; for, to be seen naked, is more shameful in the East than it is here.\*

## SECTION LXXXIV.

*Jesus tried before the High-priest; Peter denies him; Judas hangs himself.*

*Matt.* xxvi. 57—75; xxvii. 1—10; *Mark* xiv. 53—72; *Luke* xxii. 54—71; *John* xviii. 12—27.

WE have lately been attending to the remarkable scene of our Saviour's agony in the garden; a most interesting and affecting scene no doubt, but not at all difficult to account for on the supposition of his being a man like ourselves, and of his feeling as other good men would do in his peculiarly trying circumstances, with a distinct foresight of all that was to befall him.

That Jesus attended only to himself upon this occasion, is evident from the language he uses, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."† There is no appearance, therefore, of his having any thing to do with the sins of men, and suffering on their account.

We have likewise seen how Jesus was betrayed by *Judas*, and apprehended by the officers of the high-priest, after giving such proofs of his power as sufficiently shewed that his submission to them was voluntary. That it was in his power to have rescued himself, appeared [*John* xviii. 6] by the falling down to the ground of the very persons into whose hands he delivered himself. His healing the ear of the person whom Peter had smitten, shewed his perfect freedom from malice or revenge, and likewise the composure of his mind, which was likewise evident by his providing for the safety of his apostles: for it is most probable that the officers were sent to apprehend them all.

*John* xviii. 13,‡ 14. This *Annas*, though not the high-priest, had been in that office, and he seems to have had great influence in all affairs of moment, being the same that is called *Ananus* in *Josephus*,§ the Jewish historian of those times. From the house of *Annas* he was led to that of

\* See N. T. 1729, I. p. 184; *Harmer*, II. pp. 419—422; *Pearce*, I. p. 281; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 44, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 331.

† *Matt.* xxvi. 39. See *supra*, p. 338.

‡ Here *Cyril* would insert the words *ver.* 24. See *Bowyer*, p. 56.

§ *Antiq. B.* xx. Ch. ix. Sect. i. See *Whiston's Note*.



*Caiphas*, [*Matt.* xxvi. 57,] before whom he was publicly tried in the court of *Sanhedrim*, which was probably held in the precincts of the Temple. But though sentence of death was there pronounced against him, it could not be ratified but by the Roman governor, before whom they afterwards brought him.

*Luke* xxii. 68. *And if I also ask you.* If I should argue the matter with you, putting questions to you, according to the custom of disputations in ancient times, as we see in *Socrates*.

*You would not answer me.* That is, you would not discuss the matter fairly.

*John* xviii. 15. Though *Peter* fled with the rest of the apostles, yet his affection for his Master, and his anxiety for the event, led him to venture where he might be soonest informed of the issue.

*Another disciple*; meaning probably *John* himself.\*

18. *A fire.* Probably a pan of charcoal, according to the custom of the East in great houses.†

20—23. There was nothing in our Saviour's reply but what was just and manly, challenging his adversaries to prove his guilt; and nothing but a persuasion that this outrage would not offend the court can account for any servant of it using such insolence. This proves the violence and injustice with which all the proceedings against Jesus were conducted.

25—27. It may be observed, in apology for *Peter*, that he was taken by surprise, and that he had more reason for fear than any other of the apostles, on account of his having attempted to rescue his Master by force, and having actually struck the high-priest's servant. His repentance also was speedy and severe.

*Luke* xxii. 61. *Turned and looked.* *Pearce* observes, that from the accounts of *Matthew* xxvi. 58, and *Mark* xiv. 54—58, "it may be gathered that Jesus was not in the same room with Peter; that Jesus was in the house of the high-priest, and Peter only in the porch of the hall, which was beneath. Both those evangelists say only, that *Peter remembered, and called to mind the words of Jesus.*"‡

*Mark* xiv. 72. § The word *επιβαλων* may perhaps mean that he covered his face with his garments. ||

\* Yet see *Lardner*, VI. pp. 163—165; *Pearce*, I. p. 576.

† *Harmer*, VI. p. 218. (P.)

‡ *Com.* I. p. 440.

§ See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 44, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 332.

|| "He covered his head and wept." N. T. 1729, I. p. 187.

36. The word *ισαί* properly means that the evidence was not adequate to the purpose for which it was produced,\* that is, not sufficient to condemn him to death.

*Matt.* xxvi. 61—63. Nothing could be more impertinent than such a charge as this, and therefore there was no apparent reason for Jesus making any defence; and in fact, as no use could be made of it, it was not insisted upon. Accordingly, they proceed to the true cause of all their violence against him, by putting him upon his solemn oath, to say whether he was the *Messiah* or not. His acting in some respects as the *Messiah*, his never disclaiming that title, and yet his not assuming what was thought his proper character, viz. that of a prince, and his declared opposition to themselves, were the true causes of the umbrage which they took at him.

64. This [*hereafter*] may be rendered *immediately*, or *soon*, but the real meaning may be that it will *certainly* take place.†

65. Upon several occasions the high-priest was expressly forbidden to *rend his clothes*,‡ which other Jews did in cases of great grief or consternation.

*Blasphemy* means something arrogant and insulting with respect to God.§

67. *Spitting on the face* was the greatest expression of hatred and detestation. The word [*smote*] in the original denotes *rude and violent blows*, such as occasion great pain and bruises.||

68. This was in ridicule of the character of Jesus as a *prophet*.

xxvii. 2. From this great council of the nation, which was in the precincts of the Temple, Jesus was sent *bound* to *Pilate*, who was at that time at Jerusalem, being the *Passover*; for at all the great festivals the Roman governor came to *Jerusalem*, that by his presence he might prevent any tumult or sedition, his usual residence being at *Cæsarea*.

\* See Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 44, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 331.

† Wakefield. (*P.*) W.'s *Notes*, p. 23, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 312. For ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, *Heinsius* proposes to read ἀναπτι. "I expressly say to you, ye shall see the Son of Man," &c. *Bowyer*, p. 15.

‡ See *Lev.* xxi. 10; *Pearce*, l. p. 189; *Wakefield*, p. 381.

§ "Observe the malice and inconsistency of this man. He solemnly adjures our Lord in the name of the living God, as if he were really desirous of information upon this head, to inform him whether he was the *Messiah*, the much expected prophet of the Jewish nation, or not. As soon as Jesus acknowledged himself to be that person, this unreasonable judge, instead of examining the plausibility of his pretensions, charges him with speaking blasphemy." *Wakefield*, p. 381. See W.'s *Notes*, p. 23, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 312.

See *Wakefield*, p. 381.



3\*—S. The repentance of Judas, especially attended with such bitter remorse as induced him to lay violent hands upon himself, is a most convincing evidence of the perfect innocence of Jesus; as he had the same opportunity of observing his Master's conduct with the other apostles. Nay, being the purse-bearer to the company, he may be very well thought to have had a better opportunity than any of them of knowing whether his Master had any mercenary design.

The fate of *Judas* is related with some different circumstances by the apostle *Peter*, in *Acts* i. 18—20.† An ingenious friend of mine conjectures that the two accounts may be reconciled in the following manner.—The court in which the council was assembled adjoined to the Temple, and Judas, from the interest he could not help taking in the affair, was attending without; and as soon as he found that his Master was condemned to die, and that he made no attempt to rescue himself, he was filled with the keenest remorse, having before perhaps had no distinct idea of the issue and progress of the business. And indeed things appear in a very different light to men when they are full of resentment, and after that resentment is satiated by having gained their purpose. In this state of mind he went into the open court before the members had dismissed themselves, and returned the money which he had received as the price of his treachery, and it being early in the morning, perhaps before day-light, he hanged himself on the balustrades of the Temple, or somewhere within the court. But, being quickly found, he was, in order to get rid of the body in the quickest manner, thrown over the wall into the deep valley which separates the Temple from the Mount of Olives. Or he might be found hanging over the precipice, and be cut down as he hung. Thus the fact would be as generally known as any thing well could be; and in the eye of Providence it was of importance that his death and the manner of it should not be concealed. As to Judas's buying the field himself, or the high-priest buying it with his money, it amounts to the same thing.

The guilt of Judas was certainly very great. Jesus himself asserted it when he said, that *it would have been better*

\* See a very probable account of this transaction, *Theol. Repos.* I. pp. 63—70. (P.) See *Le Cene*, pp. 558—562; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 238—240; Mead's *Med. Sacr.* (Ch. xiv.) pp. 108—112; *Pearce*, I. pp. 191, 192; *Wakefield*, pp. 386—389; *W.'s Evidences of Christianity*, 1798, (*Rem.* xxxi.) pp. 164—171.

† See *Theol. Repos.* I. pp. 63—70, III. pp. 32—37.

for him if he had never been born.\* It is possible, however, that there may be, and indeed I have no doubt there are, many persons of worse characters than Judas, and therefore who will have greater condemnation. We may easily conceive the case of Judas to have been worse than it was. For example, he would have been a worse man if he had felt no remorse, if he had not repented at all, but had been capable of enjoying the reward of his perfidy; and if, instead of destroying himself,† he had become an opposer of Christianity and a persecutor of his brethren.

I doubt not but that many of the Scribes and Pharisees were men of more obdurate minds, and more unrelenting malice, than Judas. I do not advance these things to lessen the crime of Judas, but only to enable us to form a just idea of it.

On the other hand, it may, perhaps, be said with truth, that no person who had had the advantages which Judas had, of an intimate society with Jesus, and beginning, as he must have done, with a tolerably fair character, was capable of proceeding farther in wickedness than he did. But, upon the whole, it is evident that he acted more from resentment than any fixed principle.

9, 10. The passage alluded to is in *Zechariah*, and not in *Jeremiah*, and it is probable that originally it was only in the prophet, without the mention of any particular prophet,‡ as it now is in the very ancient Syriac version. There, however, it is certainly no prophecy concerning Christ; but it contains circumstances similar enough to those in his situation.§ The prophet was directed to ask the rulers of the Jews at what price they valued his labours, as a watchman or shepherd over them, and they, in contempt, answered *thirty pieces of silver*, which was the usual price of a slave,

\* See Winchester's *Dialogues*, Ed. 4, 1799, pp. 78—87, and Mr. Vidler's Note, *ibid.* p. 87.

† See Mr. Vidler's View of the "Evidence that Judas did not perish by his own Hands," *ibid.* pp. 81—83, Note.

‡ Pearce (l. p. 192) thinks "that Matthew wrote only the prophet, without naming him; and that the word *Jeremy* crept very early into the text—through mistake instead of *Zechariah*," whose the words are, (*Zech.* xi. 12, 13). However, Mr. Mede and Bishop Kidder say that the six last chapters of *Zechariah* were originally in *Jeremiah*. (P. See Vol. XII. pp. 401, 402; Mede (to Usher) Ep. xxxi. p. 786; Upton on *Shakespeare*, (B. ii. Sect. xiii. ad fin.) p. 259; Bowyer, pp. 15, 16; *Theol. Repos.* III. pp. 39—41; Wakefield, p. 389.

§ "This allegation of the prophecy seems merely accommodated to Jewish readers, as well as the transaction from which it originated: accordingly, Luke omits the transaction, and neglects the prophecy." Wakefield, p. 389. See Newcome, (on *Zech.* xi. 13,) *Minor Prophets*, p. 204.



and this sum God directed him to give to *a potter*. The life of Jesus being valued at the same price, and that sum being given for the purchase of a field called *the potter's field*, was sufficient to strike the mind of the evangelist, as a remarkable coincidence of circumstances in the two cases. It may seem extraordinary that any piece of ground, deserving the name of *a field*, so near to Jerusalem, should be sold so cheap. But besides being very small, as it must have been to be employed for the purpose of a burying-ground, it might have been so dug up for the use of the potters, as to be unfit for any other purpose.\*

### PARAPHRASE.

*Matt.* xxvi. (64.) Jesus said, I am indeed the Christ, and notwithstanding my present state of humiliation, you shall see verified in me all, and more than you have been taught to expect, concerning the *Messiah*, but which you improperly look for at present, namely, that I should appear sitting at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

\* A large quantity of the earth of this field is said to have been transported to *Rome* by the empress *Helena*, a lady distinguished in the *fabulous* history of the *Church*. At *Rome*, being deposited on the spot called *Campo Santo*, it was reserved for the burial of strangers, and there retained a *marvellous* property of consuming in twenty-four hours all the flesh of the bodies interred. This story appears to have been credited by several authors. The following quotation, from *Adricomius*, a geographer of the sixteenth century, (in *Descriptione Hierusalem*, N. 216, p. 173,) may amuse some of my readers:

“Cum jussu imperatricis *Helena* de hoc agro, quantum terræ plures naves capere poterant, Romam avectum, ac juxta montem Vaticanum in eum locum exoneratum sit, quem incolæ *Campum Sanctum* vocitant, licet cælum mutarit, eandem tamen retinere vim quotidiana experientia docet. Romanos enim respuens, sola peregrinorum corpora ad sepulturam admittit: quorum etiam hic omnem carnis substantiam intra viginti quatuor horas prorsus consumit, ossibus tantum residuis.” See *Jac. Philippi Tomasini de Tesseris Hospitalitatis Liber Singularis*, (Amst. 1670,) p. 218.

Sandys, in 1611, was shewn the *field of blood*, “in the midst whereof” he found “a large square room, made by the mother of Constantine—out of which arise certain little *cupolas*, open in the midst, to let down the dead bodies;—a greedy grave; for they say that the earth thereof, within the space of forty-eight hours, will consume the flesh that is laid thereon.” He mentions “the earth transported from hence” to “*Rome*, in *Campo Santo*, brought thither in 270 ships, which, though changing soils, retaineth her virtue.” *Travels*, (L. iii.) p. 145. *Maundrell* visited this “*Charnel-House*,” and “looking down, could see many bodies under several degrees of decay.” Thus he fairly “conjectured that this grave does not make that quick dispatch with the bodies committed to it, which is commonly reported.” *Journey*, p. 101.

## SECTION LXXXV.

*Jesus insulted by Herod, and condemned by Pilate.*

*Matt.* xxvii. 11—26 ; *Mark* xv. 1—15 ; *Luke* xxiii. 1—25 ;  
*John* xviii. 28—40.

WE have seen with what wonderful composure and propriety Jesus behaved on his trial before the high-priest ; and perhaps on no trial whatever were there more apparent marks of partiality and malice, the judges being evidently predetermined at all events to have their revenge. They were not provided with a specific charge of any thing that could be deemed *capital* ; and when two witnesses, which the law required, appeared, it was only to charge him with saying that *if the Temple was destroyed, he could build it again in three days* ; an accusation so extremely frivolous, and so little to the purpose, that the judges themselves made no use of it. They therefore charged him upon his oath to tell them whether he was the *Messiah* or not. Being adjured in this solemn manner, he, with equal solemnity, declared that *he was* ; and moreover informed them, that hereafter they should see the very sign which themselves deemed to be characteristic of the Messiah, namely, *the sign from heaven*, mentioned in the prophet *Daniel*, [vii. 13]. “Hereafter,” says he, [*Matt.* xxiv. 30,] “they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” On this his own confession they condemned him to death as a *blasphemer* ; it being deemed *blasphemy* to pretend to be a prophet when a man was not really so, notwithstanding Jesus had given abundant proof of his divine mission. Having now condemned him to death in their own courts, on one pretence, they bring him before *Pilate*, on another, different at least in form, and better adapted to gain their purpose with the Romans.

*John* xviii. 28. The Jews had eaten the Passover the preceding evening ; but, as the whole festival continued seven days, it is probable that by the phrase *eating the pass-over*, the evangelist meant keeping the Passover in general, or that feast of which this was the principal part, and to which it gave its name.

As the Jews scrupled going into the house of a Gentile on any public solemnity, it appears that the Roman governor, when at Jerusalem, held his tribunal in the open



air ; probably in the court of the house appropriated to his residence, which was not far from the Temple. Indeed, it was usual with the ancients to hold their courts of justice in the open air, no inconvenience attending this in a warm climate.

Among other superstitions in the institutions of Moses, impurity was thought to be contracted by touching a Heathen.

31. *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* The Jews were then subject to the Romans, who administered the civil government by their own officers, not leaving to the Jews the power of life and death ;\* a full proof that *the sceptre* was effectually *departed from Judah*, which was to take place before the coming of the *Messiah*, and which never had been the case with the Jews before *in their own country*, though they had been subject both to the Persians and Macedonians.

32. *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.* On several occasions our Lord, speaking of his death, had alluded to this particular manner of it, viz. crucifixion, which was a punishment peculiar to the Romans. Thus he says, *John* xii. 32, "If I be lifted up from the earth ;" *John* iii. 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

33. *Luke* (xxiii. 2) states the accusation more formally and distinctly as follows : "We found this *man* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king." Now it does not appear that they were able to give any proof of Jesus having forbidden to pay *tribute*. They produced no witnesses of this ; and their accusing him of pretending to be *a king*, was only their own construction of his late declaration, that he was the *Messiah* ; for in their idea the *Messiah* was to be a king, and release them from all foreign subjection.

36. *My kingdom is not of this world.*† Jesus did not deny either that he was a king, or the king of the Jews ; but only asserted that his kingdom was of such a nature as not to interfere with any of the kingdoms of this world, and therefore did not need to give umbrage to the Romans.

\* See *Pearce*, I. pp. 578, 579.

† "That is, not *from this world*, or to be set up by worldly means, as other kingdoms are.—Armies and swords are not fit means to conquer the *souls* of men, and therefore Christ was to perform his conquests by a more divine and invisible way." *Mede* (*Dis.* xxv.), p. 103. See *Pearce*, I. p. 180.

38. *What is truth?* Very probably Jesus made a pause, and did not answer immediately; or *Pilate*, recollecting that the question had nothing to do with the business of the trial,\* might not wait for any answer.

*Luke* xxiii. 5. Here again the charge is general and indistinct. It is certain that Jesus had *taught the people* in the manner that they describe. But the proper question was, *what had he taught?*

7. This was evidently a design to get rid of the business; for *Pilate* clearly perceived the malice of the Jews in it, and he was not disposed to gratify them; not from any love of justice, for we shall find that he was not inflexible in that respect, but he had no motive of prejudice against Jesus, but rather against his enemies, with whom he was at variance. At the same time he probably gave his conduct an air of compliment to *Herod*, who appears to have taken it in this light.†

8. *Herod* was a man of pleasure, but a Jew, and therefore a believer in miracles. He had been much struck with the preaching of John, and for some time imagined that Jesus was the same person raised from the dead. It is probable he had never seen Jesus before, though he had heard much of him and of his miracles.

10. We are not told what these *accusations* were, but they amounted to nothing that Jesus thought necessary to reply to, and indeed nothing that Herod himself thought to be of any importance, or at least sufficiently proved.

11.‡ As nothing was proved against Jesus, it was a criminal and base compliance to a clamorous multitude to insult him in this manner.

\* "Pilate seems to have meant, what is *truth* to me? I am the governor, and my duty is to keep all things quiet and in order." *Pearce*, I. p. 580. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 123, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 408.

† "Lactantius (*Inst.* p. 369, *Oxon.*) informs us (but upon what authority, he does not say) that this Herod the *Tetrarch*, then at Jerusalem, was the person who chiefly instigated the Jewish rulers to put Jesus to death, *me tuens ne regno pelleretur*, out of fear that if Jesus had lived to erect his kingdom, he himself should be dethroned." *Pearce*, I. pp. 442, 443.

‡ "And in derision sent him back magnificently dressed to Pilate." N. T. 1729, I. p. 310. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 82, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 369.

*A gorgeous robe.* "Rather, a *shining robe*, that is, a white one. The nobility among the Jews were accustomed to wear white robes.—Hence *Rev.* iii. 4, concerning the saints in Sardis.—In this *white robe*, therefore, Herod caused Jesus to be clothed; and the nobility among the Romans wearing purple for the most part, Pilate's soldiers, who were Romans, put on Jesus a *purple robe*, (*Mark* xv. 17, *John* xix. 2,) both of them following the custom of their own country, when, by way of mocking Jesus as a king, they clothed him in robes of state." *Pearce*, I. p. 443.



15. "Nothing worthy of death *appears* to have been done by him."\*

16. This proposal to *chastise* Jesus, by which was meant a most cruel *scourging*, was manifestly unjust, and could only be intended to pacify the Jews, who were clamorous for a greater punishment.

*Matt.* xxvii. 15. This appears to have been grown into an established custom, which no governor thought himself at liberty to depart from.†

20. Such was the influence that the Pharisees had over the Jewish populace, that *Josephus* says, whatever they said, even against the emperor, or the high-priest himself, was instantly credited by them.‡

21§—25. It is remarkable in how simple and dispassionate a manner the evangelists relate the particulars of this most interesting transaction. Here are no encomiums on Jesus or his conduct, and no reflections on his adversaries; but the *facts* are such that it is impossible not to see in them what all the characters really were. It is impossible not to perceive the extreme injustice and violence of the enemies of Jesus, who could make so light of the crimes of sedition and murder, when blinded by their envy, jealousy and revenge.

26. *Had scourged Jesus.* The Romans used to whip or scourge those who were to be crucified;|| and the whole was generally done with every mark of insult and ridicule, as well as of cruelty; this being the punishment of the vilest slaves and the most detested criminals.

From the circumstances before us, it is evident that Jesus and his miracles had been far from passing without the notice of the principal people among the Jews; of which unbelievers at this day would be glad to avail themselves. It is plain, from this rage and malice of his enemies, that he had been observed with the most jealous attention, and that no mark of imposture, no false pretence to a power of

\* *Wakefield.* (P.) See *W.'s Notes*, p. 82, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 369; *Pearce*, I. p. 444.

† See *Luke* xxiii. 17. "This custom was probably introduced by *Pilate* himself, who was a time-serving man, and might wish to ingratiate himself with the *Jewish* nation by this mark of attention and complaisance." *Wakefield*, p. 390.

‡ *Antiq. L.* xiii. C. x. Sect. v. (P.) See *Pearce*, I. p. 194, and on *Chap.* xxvi. 47, *ibid.* p. 186.

§ See *ibid.* pp. 194, 195; *Wakefield*, pp. 390, 391.

|| See *Livy*, L. xxxiii. C. xxxvi.; *Josephus's War*, B. v. Ch. xi. Sect. i.; *Harwood's Introd.* II. (Sect. xxiv.) p. 343; *Pearce*, I. p. 195; *Wakefield*, pp. 391, 392.

working miracles, could be alleged against him. Nothing of this appears in the course of his trial, either before the high-priest, or before Pilate, and his *miracles* had been more public than his *teaching*, of which they do make mention.

### PARAPHRASE.

*John xviii. (37.) To this end was I born*, and have received my commission from God, viz. to bear witness to all important truth, and especially this concerning which thou askest me: for indeed I am a king, though not such a king as I am accused of pretending to be. This I say is a great truth, and all who are candid and love the truth, have had evidence enough of it.

### SECTION LXXXVI.

*Jesus scourged, and led to Crucifixion.*

*Matt. xxvii. 27—32 ; Mark xv. 16—21 ; Luke xxiii. 26—32 ; John xix. 1—17.*

WE have seen with what reluctance *Pilate* was prevailed upon to pass sentence of death upon Jesus. He repeatedly acknowledged that he saw no cause of death in him, and therefore, had he been an upright man, and a good magistrate, he would not, upon any consideration, have consented to it. There was no accusation brought against him, supported by any proper evidence, that could affect his life. As to what they *did* allege against him, as having *perverted the people, and forbidden to pay tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself was a king*, Pilate, seeing no evidence of it, but clearly perceiving the prejudice and malice with which the prosecution was carried on, paid no regard to it, and Jesus, with great propriety and dignity, made no defence, when there was no proper charge against him, and no witnesses to confront him. He always, however, replied to every thing that was material; and his just discrimination in this respect shews that he was under no consternation, but perfectly master of himself.

When Pilate repeatedly urged him to say whether he was *a king*, he did not deny it; but, that he might not be misled by the word, he added, that his kingdom was such that the powers of this world did not need to take umbrage at it, not being *a kingdom of this world*. But as far as the charge was in any sense true, he, who *came to bear witness of the truth*, would



acknowledge it. Notwithstanding this, some of the common people, instigated by the chief priests, and seeing no prospect of his assuming the character out of respect to which alone they were attached to him, were clamorous for his crucifixion, and demanded *Barabbas*, a robber and murderer, to be set at liberty rather than him: for Pilate, when he could not prevail upon them to release him as an innocent person, would have dismissed him as a pardoned criminal.

There is no reason to suppose that the great body of the Jewish people demanded the death of Jesus, much less that they would have deliberately voted his destruction, if it had been seriously proposed to them. Many circumstances render this supposition highly improbable. It is well known how a few clamorous persons have the most decisive influence in the proceedings of the mob, and how great multitudes are often intimidated by the noise of a few, when those few come prepared for any particular purpose, and have laid their plan, while the rest are taken by surprise. This was the case here. The enemies of Jesus among the chief priests might bring their servants and dependents, and presently fill the chief places in any court of justice, while the friends of Jesus, suspecting nothing of the matter, and many of them being intimidated, would not make any effectual opposition. Besides, the whole was transacted early in the morning, and probably in little more than an hour; and after Jesus was delivered to a company of Roman soldiers for immediate execution, any attempt to rescue him would have come too late; not to say that many, who had seen his miracles, would naturally think, that, if he thought proper, he was able to rescue himself.

Another circumstance that *Matthew* [xxvii. 19] mentions, which made Pilate more backward to pass sentence of death upon Jesus, was a message from his wife, who had had an extraordinary dream, which made her uneasy on his account, and the Heathens in general were extremely superstitious with respect to dreams. Whether this dream was miraculous, or not, does not appear.

*John* xix. 1. This was a cruel beating, such as is generally used in discipline of the army with us. But persons sentenced to be crucified, being generally the lowest of criminals, were treated with every mark of cruelty and insult.

*Matt.* xxvii. 29. *A crown of thorns.* Ἀκανθῶν. This may signify a crown made of the herb *acanthus* or *bearsfoot*, which is not thorny, but soft and smooth; and this herb is said to

be very common in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.\* *Pearce* also remarks that he does not "find that it is mentioned by any one of the primitive Christian writers as an instance of the *cruelty* used towards our Saviour, before he was led to crucifixion, till the time of Tertullian," who lived nearly two centuries after Christ. As the reed put into the hand of Jesus was only intended to mock him, it is probable that the crown was a circumstance of the same nature.†

*John* xix. 5. Thinking, perhaps, to move their compassion, or that their rage would be satisfied by seeing what he had already suffered, appearing, no doubt, very bloody after the cruel scourging.

6. It is evident they were not at all moved by the sad spectacle.

7. Here the term *Son of God* is used as synonymous to the *Messiah*. It was for assuming this character that he had been sentenced to death by the Jewish Sanhedrim. The *law* that is here referred to, if it was a law of Moses,‡ could only be that which appoints blasphemers to be stoned; and the Jews would probably consider any man as a blasphemer, who pretended to have a commission from God, when in their opinion he had none.

8. *Pilate*, having probably heard of the miracles of Jesus, and not knowing what truth there might be in them, would naturally suspect that there might be something extraordinary in his case; and therefore that some judgment might befall himself for consenting to his death;§ there being many examples in the Heathen mythology of persons who were severely punished for insults on their gods, or the descendants of their gods.

9. That is, *Who art thou*, and what are thy pretensions? But to this he made no answer. He had sufficiently answered to every proper question, or whenever there was any accusation proper to reply to. But there was great dignity and propriety in his not answering to any thing else, espe-

\* *Pearce*, I. p. 196. See this opinion examined by *Wakefield*, pp. 394, 395.

† *Pearce*, I. p. 196. "The mock majesty of *Carabas*, who was set up by the Alexandrians in derision of *Agrippa* and the Jews, as it is related by *Philo Judæus*, (in *Flacc.* p. 751, Ed. *Col.*) has so great a resemblance to this treatment of our Saviour, as cannot but gratify and surprise the reader. Having placed *Carabas* on an eminence, that all might see him, they put a broad plant on his head for a diadem, and cover his body with a carpet instead of a scarlet robe. One gave him a piece of a rush, which he found in the road, for a sceptre—Then a great cry was raised among the crowd, who saluted him by the title of Lord." *Wakefield*, p. 395.

‡ See *Deut.* xviii. 20; *Theol. Repos.* IV. p. 237.

§ Perhaps he feared "an open sedition, if he did not comply with the multitude." See *Lardner* (and his quotations from *Beza* and *Calvin*), I. pp. 150, 151.



cially now that they had already begun to beat him as a criminal, though they had not proved him to be guilty of any crime. He had no favour to ask. He knew that his death was determined, and therefore he calmly submitted to the malice of his enemies, and the will of God.

11. This was the language of a man perfectly conscious of his innocence, and there was probably something in the manner of it that struck *Pilate* very forcibly.

*Except it were given thee from above.\** Some suppose that this refers to the Roman emperor. If so, the meaning will be, As you are only the emperor's deputy, and therefore obliged to take cognizance of such persons as are brought before you, they who have unjustly accused me to you are more guilty than you. But I think that *ανωθεν* means from God, and therefore that the Jews, who had seen the miracles which he did by the power of God, and not only knew his *innocence*, but ought to have distinguished and acknowledged his *divine mission*, were much more guilty than *Pilate*, who was a stranger both to the Scriptures, and most of the particulars of Jesus's life.

12. *From thenceforth.* This may be rendered, *upon this*, or as *on this account*.†

14. This was probably said by way of insult to the Jews, with whom he was displeased. *The sixth hour* in our present copies was probably the mistake of some early transcriber; for, from the accounts of the other evangelists, and many circumstances, it must have been about *the third hour*, or our nine in the morning.‡

The word *Passover* has been inserted here through ignorance.§

15. This explicit acknowledgment of perfect subjection to the Romans, must have been mortifying to the Jews, and some cause of triumph to *Pilate*, who knew their refractory disposition.

*Matt. xxvii. 32.* It is probable that, according to the custom on these occasions, they gave Jesus the transverse piece of wood belonging to the cross to carry to the place of execution; but probably perceiving him to be much exhausted, and unable to bear it, at least the whole way, which was

\* See *Lardner*, XI. pp. 282—287; *Wakefield's Notes*, pp. 123, 124, N.T. Ed. 2, I. p. 408.

† On *vers. 9—12*, see *Lardner*, I. pp. 151, 152.

‡ See *Mark* xv. 25; *Le Cene*, p. 283; *Essay*, 1727, p. 289; *Harmer*, III. pp. 134—137.

§ *Mann* (*Diss. ii.*), p. 163; *Bowyer*, (*P.*) 1763, pp. 56, 57. See *Pearce*, I. p. 588.

about a mile, or a mile and a half, they gave it to another person to carry it for him.\*

*Luke* xxiii. 28. It is remarkable that, after his agony in the garden, Jesus never expressed the least concern for himself, or any dread of his sufferings. But it is observable that all evils, and death itself, appear most terrible at some distance; and after Jesus had given full vent to his own fears and apprehensions, his mind was perfectly composed, and occupied by other considerations.

30. This was a proverbial expression, denoting the greatest consternation.

*John* xix. 17. This place was a little without the walls of the city, though it was now inclosed within them.† It was not usual with the Jews to execute within any city.

We see here that it was the custom with the Romans, as with the ancients in general, to carry the sentence of their laws into immediate execution. No sooner was sentence of death pronounced upon Jesus, but, without sending him to prison, he was immediately conducted to the place of crucifixion. It would be wise in us to adopt this policy;‡ as it would add greatly to the dread of punishment, and consequently contribute much to the prevention of crimes. The reason alleged for our delay of execution, viz. to give the criminal time to repent, and make his peace with God, is founded on superstition, delusive with respect to the sufferer, and of bad example to others.

It may be proper to mention, in this place, that *Pilate*, who, to ingratiate himself with the Jews, acted contrary to his judgment, in consenting to the death of an innocent person,§ did not gain his ends by it; being some time afterwards accused to the emperor of mal-administration, in

\* See *Harwood* (Sect. xxiv.), II. pp. 344, 345.

† *Maundrell*, in 1697, visited "the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, founded upon Mount Calvary." That *Mount*, which is a small eminency or hill upon the greater Mount of Moriah, he found "in the midst of Jerusalem." *Travels*, pp. 68, 69. See also *Sandys* (L. iii.), p. 124.

‡ I cannot help thinking that it would be far wiser, as it would be evidently more humane, to adopt a policy, which should restore to society, by salutary discipline, instead of destroying by legal vengeance, a convicted criminal, even of the most heinous description. It is, indeed, horrible to reflect on the legal murders which have been perpetrated, especially in England, by the forms of criminal justice. Nor was it worthy of a Christian, who had imbibed so much of the spirit of his Master as Dr. Priestley generally discovered, here to introduce the awful subject of our capital punishments, only to recommend, though with a good design, a more speedy employment of the executioner.

§ "Tacitus, the Roman historian, bears witness to the capital punishment of Jesus Christ, under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, in the following memorable passage of his *Annals*:

"Nero—quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos—vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor



consequence of which he was banished into Gaul, where it is said that he put an end to his own life.\*

### PARAPHRASE.

*John* xix. (11.) Jesus answered, Thou couldst have had no power against me at all, if it had not been given to thee from God, who, in his great wisdom, has appointed that I should suffer death. With respect to thee, I am simply an innocent man, whom thou oughtest not to condemn; but the Jews, who have delivered me into thine hands, have had sufficient opportunity of knowing much more of me than mere innocence; they have persecuted to death one whom they might have known to be a prophet, and even their Messiah. They, therefore, have much greater guilt than thou hast.

*Luke* xxiii. (31.) If Divine Providence, for wise ends, permits this suffering to befall me, who am an innocent person, so that there is no more apparent propriety in my being abandoned to this fate, than to make fuel of green wood, what will be done to you whose vices render you as ripe for destruction as dry wood is fit for burning?

### SECTION LXXXVII.

#### *The Crucifixion of Jesus.*

*Matt.* xxvii. 33—50; *Mark* xv. 22—37; *Luke* xxiii. 33—44, 46; *John* xix. 18—30.

WE are now attending to one of the most interesting scenes in all history, the cruel and ignominious death of Jesus. It was the triumph of his enemies, but, though un-

nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. *Tacit. Ann. L. xv. p. 313, Ed. Amst.*

"Nero put those, who commonly went by the name of Christians, to the most exquisite tortures. That term was given them from Christ, who was capitally punished, in the reign of Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate the governor."

*Wakefield, p. 392.*

\* See *Jos. Antiq. B. xviii. Ch. iii. Sect. i. ii.*; *Ch. iv. Sect. i. ii. War, B. ii. Ch. ix. Sect. ii.—iv.* "Pilate began this year (37) to feel the effects of Divine vengeance. Obstinate and hard-hearted, his violences had given rise to several disturbances and seditions among the people entrusted to his care: having never known what it was to yield, except when he ought to have defended the innocence and justice of Jesus Christ, he was at length, at the request of the Jews and Samaritans, and in consequence of their complaints, deposed by Vitellius, after having been magistrate ten years. Returning to Rome, he found new disgraces to suffer there. The tradition of Vienne, in Dauphiny, is, that he was banished to that town. M. de Tillemont thinks he died in the fortieth year of Christ." *Crevier's Rom. Emp. (B. vii. Sect. i.) III. p. 22.*

thought of by them, the necessary means of his exaltation and glory, as well as of the spread of his religion, by giving such an evidence to his resurrection as no other mode of death could have given to it. Far be it from us to suppose that God was pleased with this scene, any farther than as it exhibited the highest act of obedience to his will, by the most perfect of our race, and as it was the means of giving the highest degree of evidence to the truth of the gospel, by which the world was reclaimed from idolatry and vice, and thereby men were fitted for a happy immortality.

Every particular in this interesting scene is highly edifying to us, especially the patience and composure with which Jesus bore his cruel sufferings, from a principle of perfect resignation to the will of God, and the prospect of honour to which he would be advanced in consequence of it; for, being a man, he felt as a man, both with respect to fears and hopes. In the garden he felt the apprehension of his approaching sufferings with the strongest marks of anxiety and distress; and now, "for the joy that was set before him," as the apostle says, [*Heb. xii. 2.*] he "endured the cross, despising the shame."

*John* xix. 19. The use of this inscription was, that all who were present at the execution might know what the crime, real or supposed, had been.

*Luke* [xxiii. 34] adds a circumstance of much importance, omitted by the other evangelists, viz. the prayer of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was probably pronounced at the time of his greatest agony, as they were nailing him to the cross, or afterwards raising it up as he hung upon it; and probably respected the soldiers only, who were his immediate executioners, and who had no concern in the guilt of the transaction.\* It shews, however, the most wonderful composure of mind and benevolence, to which very few have attained.

*John* xix. 22.† It is plain that the real wishes of Pilate had been overruled by the violence of the Jews, and though, to save himself from a prosecution, he had given up Jesus to their will, he was far from being in good humour with them, or disposed to oblige them farther than necessary.

*Matt.* xxvii. 34. This may be rendered *bitters*, and not *gall*. It was some intoxicating draught.‡

\* See *Harwood*, (Sect. xxiv.,) II. pp. 348, 349.

† "That is, I will not alter it. It is an eastern way of speaking. See *Gen. xliii. 14.*" *Pearce*, I. p. 584.

‡ *Wakefield* [p. 395]. (*P.*) See *W.'s Notes*, p. 24, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 313. "Voce *χαλῆς* evangelista speciem amaram, in genere designavit. Hanc *Marcus*



Some think this *vinegar mingled with gall* was a different thing from *wine mingled with myrrh*, mentioned *Mark* xv. 23, and that the former was offered by way of insult, and the latter by his friends, it being a stupifying potion, kindly intended to make him less sensible of pain. *Pearce* observes, "that wine mingled with frankincense was usually given" by the Jews "to such persons as were to suffer death;" and "that Galen says, that *the juice of poppies, myrrh, &c., if taken in large quantities, does intoxicate, or kill;* and that Theophrastus (*de Odor*) says of *myrrh*, that it is *of a warm nature, astringent and bitter*. Well, therefore," says *Pearce*, might Matthew call it *gall*."\* Whatever the potion was, Jesus declined availing himself of it, choosing to meet death in all its natural horror.

*John* xix. 23. It seems to have been the custom of most nations that the executioners should have the clothes of those whom they executed.†

*Matt.* xxvii. 35. The latter part of this verse, concerning the passage in the *Psalms*, [xxii. 18,] is not in any of the ancient versions, except the *Vulgate*.‡

*The vest was without seam.* According to Dr. Shaw,§ the Jews wore a close-bodied frock, or tunic without sleeves, which differed little from the Roman tunica. The χιτων, or coat of our Saviour, which was woven *without seam from the top throughout*, might be of the like fashion. This was retained when a person was said to lay aside his garment, as of our Saviour when he washed his disciples' feet, and of Peter when he swam to the shore. All the garments of the eastern people were loose, and wide, so as to fit almost any person; a circumstance which explains many passages of Scripture, and accounts for the large quantity of clothes ready made, with which the wardrobes of the rich were furnished.

*Luke* xxiii. 42. *Lord, remember me.*|| *Pearce* says that this man "seems to have thought that Jesus was the expected Messiah; and that, though he now suffered death, he would be raised again to life, and would set up a tem-

(xv. 23) *myrrham* fuisse determinat. Myrrha vero, ab amaritudine summa, nomen traxit." *Mede*, p. 518.

\* See *Pearce*, I. pp. 197, 286; *Le Cene*, p. 277; *Essay*, 1727, p. 286; *Wakefield*, pp. 395, 396.

† See *Harwood*, II. p. 349; *Pearce*, I. p. 584.

‡ *Wakefield* [p. 396]. (P.) See *W.'s Notes*, p. 24, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 313; also N. T. 1729, I. p. 114.

§ *Travels*, p. 266. (P.)

|| See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 83, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 369.

poral kingdom.”\* But it may be asked, how came this man to hope in circumstances in which all the apostles despaired?

43. *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* By *Paradise* the Jews meant the place of rest for good men, where they were to sleep till the resurrection. It was one region in the imaginary *Hades*, but supposed to be separated from the place of the wicked.

The exact literal construction of these words cannot be true, if by *Paradise* be meant any other than the imaginary place of sleep for deceased good men; for if by *Paradise* be meant the place where God is peculiarly present, Christ himself did not go thither till after his ascension, when, only, he is said to have gone to the Father; and even his apostles are expressly said not to be with him there till after the resurrection, for he says, *John* xiv. 3, “I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

For these reasons some suppose that *this day* refers to the time when the promise was made,† as if Jesus had said, At this very time, notwithstanding my present circumstances of disgrace and seeming impotence, yet even now I do assure thee, that in due time thou shalt be with me in *Paradise*.

This construction, however, does not appear to me to be natural. I rather think that by *this day*, certainty was intended. In the same case the word *soon*, and other similar expressions, are sometimes to be understood.

*Matt.* xxvii. 44. *Luke* (xxiii. 39) relates this part of the history very differently, representing not both the thieves, but one of them only, as reviling Jesus. But *Luke*, not being present, might not have been so well informed as *Matthew* was; and, besides being contrary to the account of *Matthew*, there are many difficulties attending it.

That both, or either of these men, themselves in a state of torture, should be so abandoned as to revile their fellow-sufferer, would not be credible, if we did not see at this day the same extreme obduracy in many of our condemned malefactors. Besides, it is possible that these men might entertain hopes of being released from their sufferings, by joining in the popular cry against Jesus; for the wounds made by crucifixion were not mortal; so that they might

\* *Com.* i. p. 447.

† “‘I say this day to you,’ as some of the ancients in *Theophylact* and *Hesychius*.” See *Bowyer*, p. 46.



have recovered very well if they had been taken down from the crosses.

*John* xix. 25. *Mary the wife of Cleophas*. "She is said in *Matthew* xxvii. 56, and *Mark* xv. 40, to have been *the mother of James the less, and of Joses*; and this James her son is said, in *Matt.* x. 3, to have been *the son of Alpheus*. From hence it seems that Alpheus and Cleophas, or Clopas, were the same person. To which may be added, that Hegesippus is quoted by Eusebius, as saying that Clopas was the brother of Joseph, the husband of Jesus's mother."\*

26, 27. We see in this beautiful incident, both the affection of Jesus to his friends, and his wonderful composure and presence of mind in his sufferings. He was not so absorbed in his own feelings, as not to be attentive to the case of his mother, who was standing near him. He recommended her to the care of John, who was probably the most opulent, and perhaps also the most affectionate, of his apostles. From this time he was to consider her as his own mother, which he appears to have done, by taking her from that time to his own house.

The behaviour of Mary the mother of Jesus may serve to reprove the false or affected tenderness of some women, who absent themselves from all scenes of distress, as too much *hurting their feelings*, though, in general, such persons have but little of real sympathy. Here we see the mother of Jesus, no way deficient in her affection for her son, attending him in a state of torture, though she was unable to give him assistance. Though it is said "that disciple took her to his own home" *from that hour*, it may only mean *from that time in general*, and that she continued near the place of execution some time after this.

*Matt.* xxvii. 46. *Eli, Eli,† &c.* Our Lord, by quoting the beginning of the *Psalms* [xxii.], probably meant to refer the Jews to the whole of it, as remarkably descriptive of himself and his present situation.‡

47. *Some of them that stood by, said, This man calleth for Elias.§* Those must have been persons who did not understand Hebrew or Syriac.

*John* xix. 28. *I thirst.* The passage referred to is *Psalms* lxix. 21.

\* *Pearce*, I. p. 585. (P.) See *Theophylact* in *Lardner*, V. pp. 328, 329.

† See *Bowyer*, p. 17; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 25, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 314.

‡ See *Lardner*, X. p. 333; *Pearce*, I. p. 199; *Wakefield*, p. 400; *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 359, Note.

§ See *Pearce*, I. p. 199; *Wakefield*, p. 400.

29. *Vinegar*. Probably vinegar and water, *posca*, which was the common drink of the Roman soldiers. In this it is probable that no insult was intended. The common soldiers were perhaps by this time moved with some compassion, and gave him some of their common drink.

A stalk of *hyssop* was long enough for this purpose, but supposing a very slight alteration in the manuscript, the word will signify a *light spear*, which was certainly still more proper.\*

30. *Luke* xxiii. 46. It was usual with the ancients to receive the last breath of their departing friends, those for whom they had the greatest esteem, and in whom they placed the greatest confidence. Thus Jesus, perhaps with a view to this custom, desired God his Father to receive his last breath; and thus *Stephen* [*Acts* vii. 59] desired Jesus to receive *his*. But as the word which we translate *breath* means *life*, the power of breathing ending with life, Jesus might have a farther view, viz. to commit his life into the hands of God, who, he was persuaded, would soon restore it to him again.

*Matt.* xxvii. 50. *With a loud voice.*† Grotius, and others, suppose that this strength of voice was an argument of so great remains of bodily strength, that our Lord's death, which followed instantly upon it, must have been preternatural, so that he voluntarily put an end to his own sufferings, or that God chose to interpose in his favour in this manner. But this appears to me greatly to lessen the merit of our Saviour's sufferings, and the influence of *his example in suffering*; for certainly none of his followers have any reason to expect a miraculous interposition to diminish or shorten their pains. Besides, the *loud cry* might be the effect of a kind of convulsion. And considering how much our Lord must have been exhausted by his agony in the garden, and the cruel abuse he had met with, both in the high-priest's hall, and by the Roman soldiers, and the extreme sensibility of his mind, it is no wonder that the vital powers failed before those of the two robbers, and therefore that he died a proper natural death before them.‡ It has been said that the

\* See *Conj. in Theol. Repos.* IV. p. 235. (P.) See *Bowyer*, p. 58; *Huacham on Fevers*, (Ed. 3, p. 263,) in *Harwood*, (Sect. xxiv.,) p. 350, Note.

† See *Luke* xxiii. 46; *John* xix. 30.

‡ "Might not the scourging that was inflicted, the blows he had received from the soldiers when in derision they paid him homage, and the abuse he suffered in his way to Calvary, greatly contribute to accelerate his death, and occasion that speedy exit, at which one of the evangelists tell us, Pilate marvelled?" *Harwood*, (Sect. xxiv.,) ll. p. 346. See *ibid.* p. 351, Note; *Wakefield*, pp. 400, 401.



Roman centurion seemed to have thought there was something supernatural in the *manner* of his death, by which he was convinced that he was *the Son of God* (*Mark* xv. 39). But what struck him was, more probably, the devout composure with which he died, after uttering distinctly the words of the *Psalms* above mentioned, and after saying, [*Luke* xxiii. 46,] “Father, into thy hands I *commit* my spirit.”

*Luke* xxiii. 44. (*Matt.* xxvii. 45; *Mark* xv. 33.) *Darkness over all the land*,\* not by any eclipse, which could not have happened at the time of the Jewish Passover, it being always on the full moon, but probably the sky being unusually covered with black clouds; for this darkness is not said to have been miraculous.†

It is impossible to peruse this account of the sufferings of Jesus with any proper attention, without being satisfied that he was neither an enthusiast nor an impostor. His coolness and presence of mind was inconsistent with the former character, and his submitting to die at all was a proof that he could not be the latter. He voluntarily surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies when he might have made his escape; and this he never would have done if he had not been conscious of a divine mission, and thereby fully persuaded that God would raise him from the dead, and advance him to a state of glory after death.

Now let unbelievers account, if they can, for Jesus being possessed of this persuasion in his circumstances. A man whose mind was so tranquil, and who acted with the most perfect composure on all occasions, could never have got this firm persuasion without the evidence of unquestionable miracles, such as satisfied him that God was with him, and would carry him through any sufferings that he had appointed him to undergo; and it would require stronger evidence to give this perfect satisfaction to the person who was himself to suffer a cruel death, in the support of any scheme, than it would to convince another less deeply interested in it.

\* “Perhaps over the land of *Judea* only, as *Origen* and *Erasmus* thought. See *Luke* iv. 25, and *Zech.* xiii. 8.” *Pearce* (on *Matt.* xxvii. 45), I. p. 199.

† See *Taylor's Grand Apost.* pp. 161, 162; *Wakefield*, pp. 399, 400.

## SECTION LXXXVIII.

*The Burial of Jesus.*

*Matt.* xxvii. 51—66; *Mark* xv. 38—47; *Luke* xxiii. 45, 47—56; *John* xix. 31—42.

WE have been attending to one of the most interesting and affecting of all scenes, that of the crucifixion of Jesus, and have seen the amazing fortitude and meekness with which he bore all that human nature could bear, the tortures of a violent and lingering death. Even in these circumstances, in which there are evident indications of his having actually felt whatever any other man could have felt in the same situation, he even prayed for his executioners, and expressed the greatest tenderness for his mother, as well as the most perfect confidence in God. It is a scene that we ought frequently to contemplate, either to prepare us for whatever sufferings it may please God to appoint for us, as the followers of Christ, or to make us thankful that, at this day, we can have the same glorious hopes of the gospel without so severe a trial. Let us, however, be upon our guard against the trials of security and prosperity, which are no less dangerous than those of adversity; nay, in general more so. If the one has slain its thousands, the other has slain its ten thousands.

*Luke* xxiii. 45. *The vail of the Temple was rent.* The vail that separated the holy place from the Most Holy; and this was about the time that the priest was burning incense before it.

*Matt.* xxvii. 51. *The rocks rent.* Travellers say there is a very remarkable fissure now visible on Mount *Calvary*, which could not have been made by a natural earthquake, because it is not *along the strata*, but directly across them.\*

\* "This cleft, as to what now appears of it, is about a span wide at its upper part, and two deep, after which it closes; but it opens again below, (as you may see in another chapel contiguous to the side of Calvary,) and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. That this rent was made by the earthquake that happened at our Lord's passion, there is only tradition to prove; but that it is a natural and genuine breach, and not counterfeited by any art, the sense and reason of every one that sees it may convince him; for the sides of it fit like two talleys to each other; and yet it runs in such intricate windings as could not well be counterfeited by art, nor arrived at by any instruments." *Maunderell*, pp. 73, 74. *Sandys* says of "the rent of the rock," that "the insides do testify that art had no hand therein; each side to other being answerably rugged, and these were inaccessible to the workman." *Travels* (L. ii.), p. 127. *Rauwolff*, who was at Jerusalem in 1575,



52, 53. *Bodies of the saints.* Who these saints were, whether some of those mentioned in the *Old Testament*, or some persons recently dead, and personally known to the living inhabitants of Jerusalem, does not appear; but the latter is the most probable. The graves seem to have been thrown open by, or at the time of the earthquake, but the dead are not said to have come to life till after the resurrection of Jesus.\* Whether they *arose*† to an immortal life, or like Lazarus, were again subject to death, is not said.

54. The Heathens respected many persons in a similar character, and this centurion, having heard that Jesus had called himself *the Son of God*, he repeats the very words,‡ convinced that a man who died as he did must have spoken the truth.

56. The mother of Jesus is not mentioned among these *women*. It is possible, therefore, that, unable to bear the trying scene any longer, she had been led home by John, who himself had returned, for he was present when the spear was thrust into the side of Jesus. Mary, however, might stay till he was actually dead, as a considerable time passed between his death and the order given by Pilate to dispatch both him and the two thieves.

*John* xix. 31.§ This was both a *Sabbath-day*, and also the second day of *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, from which they reckoned the *fifty days* to the day of *Pentecost*, and the day on which the sheaf of first-fruits was offered.

The Romans had been used to let the bodies of persons crucified remain on the crosses till they were devoured by birds of prey. But this being contrary to the law of the

speaking of his visit to the "great chapel of Queen *Helen*, situated underneath Mount Calvaria," says, "at the bottom of the stairs do also appear very plainly the crack'd rocks, as it is mentioned in Scripture, *and the rocks rent*. And these rents, or cracks, are a foot wide, and so deep as to reach from the top to the bottom of the rocky Mount of Calvaria." *Ray's Collection*, II. p. 264.

\* "It is more natural to read with *Grotius*, 'When he yielded up the ghost, the graves were opened; and after his resurrection, many bodies of saints arose, and came out of their graves.' Thus he became the first-fruits of them that slept." *Bowyer*, p. 17. See *Pearce*, I. p. 200; *Wakefield*, pp. 403, 404.

† "The extraordinary events, related in this and the two preceding verses, were local, and confined to the holy city. They are, for this reason, left unnoticed by *Luke*, (xxiii. 45,) except the partition of the veil, which was so remarkably adapted to his purpose, as figurative of the admittance of the Gentiles into the church of God." *Ibid.* p. 404.

‡ *Were raised.* See *Le Cene*, pp. 563, 564.

§ "Or, a son of God. So the Greek words seem to have meant in the mouth of this centurion, who was probably a Heathen, and believed that some men had had deities for their parents." *Pearce*, I. p. 200. See *Wakefield*, p. 404.

§ "I suspect the words, *because it was the preparation*, to be an interpolation." *Pearce*, I. p. 586.

Jews, the Romans indulged them with dispatching and burying such persons before sunset.

32. By *breaking the legs* must be meant the dispatching of them, and therefore it was probably a blow on the breast, such as is usually given to those who are broken on the wheel, which will effectually answer the end; whereas the mere breaking of the legs would hardly do it.

34, 35. *Blood and water*. This could not be the water of the *pericardium*, for that is not in sufficient quantity; but it is said that a great quantity of *serum* is always found in the *thorax* of persons who die of torture. If this be so, it may be considered as a circumstance that proves that the death of Jesus was strictly natural.

*John* wrote after the sect of the *Gnostics* was prevalent, and one of their opinions was, that Jesus had no real body, but only the appearance of one, and consequently that he had neither proper flesh nor blood, and was incapable of feeling pain. On this account probably, *John*, whose epistles are all directed against the *Gnostics*, is so particular in asserting that he actually saw blood flowing from the body of Jesus.

Mr. Wakefield supposes that by *he knoweth*, Jesus himself is meant, being appealed to for the truth of this circumstance.\*

This wound with the spear in the chest would certainly have killed Jesus, if he had not been dead before. But so little doubt was there concerning the death of Jesus, that this objection to Christianity was never made in any early period; and now it certainly comes too late to deserve any attention. There could not have been better provision for the actual death of Jesus, than putting him into the hands of his enemies for that purpose; as they would, no doubt, take care that the business was effectually done.

36. *A bone of him shall not be broken*. This was said of the *paschal lamb*, which was in some respects typical of Christ.

37.† This is spoken of the Jews after their return to their own country, and the prophecy it contains is certainly very remarkable, and, together with what the apostle Paul says,

\* "Our evangelist makes a solemn appeal to his Master for the truth of this most curious and important fact; which he thought worthy of mentioning with particular distinction also in his *Epistles* i. 5, 8." Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 124, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 409.

† See *Psalms* xxii. 16, *Zech.* xii. 10, Vol. XII. pp. 75, 403.



*Rom. xi.*, assures us that the Jews will not only return to their own country, but also be converted to Christianity.

*Mark xv. 42.* *The preparation.\** So the day before *the Sabbath* was always called, and this is called *the preparation* of (not for) *the Passover*, because this sabbath fell in the paschal week

*John xix. 38.* This shewed some degree of courage in *Joseph of Arimathea*, more than he had shewn before. But now the confession of the centurion, and the manner in which all who were present were struck with the very remarkable circumstances in the death of Jesus, made this conduct much safer than it otherwise would have been. Besides, he must have perceived that Pilate himself was far from being satisfied with the business.

39. *An hundred pound weight.* "It appears from *Jos. Antiq. xv. 3, 4*, that great quantities of spices were used by the Jews for embalming a dead body, when they intended to shew marks of respect to the person deceased. Eighty pounds of spices were used at the funeral of Gamaliel the elder."†

40. The preparation of a body for such a sepulchre as *Joseph of Arimathea* was preparing for Jesus, was a very laborious thing, and must have employed a number of people a considerable time;‡ so that if there had been any remains of life in the body, it must have been discovered. Indeed, on many accounts, the pretence of some persons at this day that Jesus was never properly dead, is most improbable. Was it possible for a person to have been taken down from a cross, (even without considering the wound in his side, which certainly penetrated the thorax,) have been left in the state of a common corpse, wrapped up in bandages and spices, late on Friday, probably near midnight, have been shut up the whole of the next day in a cold cave, without any person to attend him, and have appeared in perfect health so early as the Sunday morning by break of day, without a miracle? On this account, the shortness of the time that Jesus lay in the sepulchre is a circumstance highly favourable to the evidences of Christianity. It is evident that all the appearances were such that neither the friends nor the enemies of Jesus had any suspicion of his being alive when he was taken down from the cross; and as they

\* See *Pearce*, l. pp. 288, 289.

† *Pearce*, l. p. 587. (P.) See *Bowyer*, p. 58; *Lardner*, XI. p. 376.

‡ See *ibid.* ("Observations on Macknight"), pp. 375—377.

had the best opportunity of judging, the objection cannot deserve the least attention at this day.

*Matt. xxvii. 60.\** The following account of our Lord's sepulchre, and the present state of it, from Dr. Shaw,† may not be unacceptable to my readers. The sepulchre where our Lord was laid was hewn out of the natural rock, but by *Helena's* cutting away the rock round about it, that the floor, or bottom of it, might be on the same level with the rest of the pavement of the church, it is now a grotto above ground, curiously overlaid with marble.

It consists of one chamber only, without cells, benches, or ornaments, about seven feet square and six high, and over the place where the body was laid (whether this was a pit, or whether the body lay bound up only in spices and linen upon the floor). Here, for many years, an oblong table of stone, of three feet in breadth, and nearly of the same height, has been erected, which serves the *Latins* for an altar. The low, narrow door, or entrance, where the stone was fixed and sealed, till rolled away by the angel, still continues to conduct us within it; and as this was not situated in the middle, but on the left hand, as the grave likewise, or the place where Christ was laid, may well be presumed to have been placed within it, on the right hand, or where the altar is at present, we may from these circumstances well account for Mary and John being obliged to stoop down before they could look into it.‡

63. *After three days.* That this means *the third day*, is evident from a passage in the Old Testament, "*2 Chron. x. 5*, where Rehoboam said to the people, *Come again unto me after three days*; and it is added in *ver. 12*, that *they came to him on the third day, as the king had commanded, saying, come again to me on the third day.*"§

65.|| *Pilate* was evidently out of humour with the Jews, as he had been when they applied to him to change the inscription on the cross.

66.¶ It does not seem to have been possible for the enemies of Jesus to have used more precautions than they

\* See *Wakefield*, pp. 404, 405.

† *Travels*, p. 264.

‡ Dr. Shaw appears to have been anticipated in this remark by Rauwolf, in 1575. See Ray's *Collection*, II. pp. 266, 267. *Sandys* has given "descriptions and draughts," to which *Maundrell* attributes "much exactness." See *Sandys*, pp. 129, 130; *Maundrell*, p. 68.

§ *Pearce* [I. p. 202] mentions this, and other instances of the same kind. (P.)

|| See *ibid.* p. 203; *Wakefield*, p. 406.

¶ On *vers. 62—66*, see *Wotton*, I. pp. 275, 276; *Lardner*, (on *Macknight*,) XI. pp. 360—362.



did, in order to prevent any imposition with respect to a resurrection, of which it is very happy for us that they were fully apprized; as their disappointment is the greatest confirmation of our faith.

## SECTION LXXXIX.

*The Resurrection of Jesus; he appears to Mary Magdalene; Peter and John visit the Sepulchre.*

*Matt.* xxviii. 1—15; *Mark* xvi. 1—11; *Luke* xxiv. 1—12; *John* xx. 1—18.

WE have been attending to the circumstances of the *death* and *burial* of Jesus. A still more interesting scene now invites our attention, and that is his *resurrection* from the dead,\* an event in which we are most of all interested, since the great object of Christianity, and indeed of the whole system of revelation, is the doctrine of a *future life*, which is most completely ascertained to us by this great event. Indeed, the death of Christ is of principal use as necessary to his resurrection; and on this account the greatest stress is always laid upon the certainty of the latter event. Thus *Paul* says to the *Corinthians*, [1 *Ep.* xv. 17, 18,] “If Christ be not raised, then is your faith vain, and they who are asleep in Christ are perished;” there being no prospect, in his idea, of any future life but on the supposition of a resurrection from the dead.

The consideration of Christ being *a man*, in all respects

\* “On this occasion an important question occurs: *Where was our Lord, and What was he doing during this interval?* For the most inadvertent reader must have perceived that the *evangelists* have unanimously observed a profound silence upon this head.

“To what can we attribute this unanimous silence of the sacred writers, but to one obvious cause—the real death and insensibility of our Saviour during that interval; in which he did and knew nothing, and therefore nothing could be recorded of him: else, indeed, in what tolerable sense, with what propriety of language, can he be said to have died, to have tasted death for every man, if he were still alive in the region of disembodied spirits? And why should he commit his spirit, or life, into his father’s hands, to be raised up on the third day, (compare *Luke* xxiii. 46, with *Rom.* viii. 11, 2 *Tim.* i. 12,) if this life never left him; but, on the contrary, was more perfect than before by losing the encumbrance of the body?”

“Never was a clear scriptural doctrine perplexed with more sophistry, or explained away by more frivolous distinctions, than this, concerning the nature of death and the resurrection, has constantly been. We have been taught to entertain such exalted ideas of the native dignity of the human soul, as neither reason nor revelation will justify. It is time for us to rectify this proud and false philosophy, and condescend to be wise only from what is written.” *Wakefield*, pp. 407, 408.

*like unto us his brethren*, is of particular use in this respect. Had he been an *angel*, and especially a being of super-angelic nature, it might have been thought that his resurrection was a privilege peculiar to himself, and what we, who are beings of quite another nature, had no right to expect; different natures being subject to different laws. The same apostle therefore urges this consideration also; saying [*vers.* 21, 22], that “since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;” both being equally *men*.

The resurrection of Jesus was an event which he had frequently mentioned, and yet was never rightly understood, or expected, by his disciples; so fully persuaded were they of his being destined to be a great prince, and therefore far from being subject to a violent death; and with *this*, whatever he had said of his *resurrection*, had always been connected; as, when he had said that his enemies would *kill him*, but that *in three days he should rise again*. Nothing could be plainer than this language. But as he had frequently spoken to them in a figurative and enigmatical style, they took it for granted that he did so on this occasion, and therefore they disputed among themselves about what this *rising from the dead* should mean; taking for granted that it meant something else than a proper resurrection, because that would have implied a proper death.

Even when Jesus was actually dead and buried, it is plain that none of his disciples had any idea of his resurrection: they were only occupied about shewing all the respect they could to the body, according to the custom of those times; and it is curious to observe how the incredulity of the disciples with respect to a real resurrection was gradually overcome.

*Matt.* xxviii. 2.\* There had been a great *trembling*, or *fear*, viz. among the soldiers, not an *earthquake*, which the reasoning will not admit. There are innumerable instances of this meaning of the Greek word.†

4. These *keepers*‡ saw nothing of Jesus; they only perceived the earthquake, and saw the angel, probably in the

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 204; *Wakefield*, pp. 409, 410.

† *Markland*. (P.) “The same word, *Ch.* viii. 24, signifies a storm in the sea. The word properly signifies a commotion, either in earth, sea, or air.” *Hallett*, II. p. 211.

‡ “Rather, *they who watched*, that is, the door of the sepulchre. See *Ch.* xxvii. 54.” *Pearce*, I. p. 204.



figure of a man, sitting upon the stone which had covered the mouth of the sepulchre.

12—15. This was a very improbable story, but the best that could have been imagined in their circumstances, as what was most likely to gain credit with many, who were sufficiently predisposed to believe any tale of the kind. And this was concerted between them before it was known, even to the disciples, that Jesus was risen. It was only known that the sepulchre was opened, and they would naturally add all the rest. It must, however, have made much against them, that they did not even pretend to have been overpowered by any multitude; for, to have rolled a stone of that magnitude, and not to have awakened any of the people who were sleeping near it, and then to have stolen the body, was absolutely impossible. But nothing can be more improbable than that a company of Roman soldiers should all sleep upon guard, when they had but a fourth part of the night to keep awake, and death was the penalty of sleeping.\*

*Mark xvi. 2. At the rising of the sun.* Pearce thinks that the original reading was, *the sun having not yet risen.*†

*Luke xxiv. 1.‡ And certain others with them.* Pearce considers these words as superfluous and an interpolation.§

*John xx. 2.* It is evident from this circumstance, that these women were far from having any expectation of a resurrection.

4. We see the great anxiety that sat upon the minds of the disciples of Jesus, by their behaviour on any new appearance, respecting their beloved Master. Mary *ran* to tell the apostles the surprising news of the sepulchre being open, and both *Peter* and *John* immediately *ran* to the sepulchre.

7. This circumstance of *the linen clothes* being found folded up in one place, and *the napkin* which had covered the head in another, was a proof that the body had not been removed in a hurry, as it would no doubt have been,

\* See Vol. II. pp. 139—144; Pearce, I. pp. 205, 206; Wakefield, p. 411.

† Com. I. p. 290. See Wotton, I. p. 277. "Perhaps we should read, 'the sun being not risen,' for according to *Luke xxiv. 1, John xx. 1*, the women arrive *before* the sun was risen. Beza. Some include the preceding part of this verse in a parenthesis. They had bought the spices, (and very early in the morning they went to the sepulchre,) that they might anoint him, when the sun was rising. D. Heinsius." Bowyer, pp. 28, 29.

‡ Connect this with "the preceding verse: 'they rested on the sabbath; but on the first day of the week,' &c." *Ibid.* p. 46.

§ Com. I. p. 450.

if it had been carried off either by force or by stealth, as it would have taken a great deal of time to disengage the body from the many folds of linen cloth in which it was wrapped, especially covered as it was with spices; and yet these clothes were removed, and left carefully folded up. This was so remarkable a circumstance, that it seems to have convinced John, the writer of this account, that Jesus was actually risen; and in this his usual modest manner, he seems to intimate that he was the first person who believed the resurrection.

9.\* The evidence of a resurrection, we see here, was only from *facts* and *circumstances*, and not at all from the *Scriptures*, or from what Jesus had told them.

11. *Mary*, after telling the disciples the news of the sepulchre being opened, returned to the place where all her affections were centred, and continued there till *Peter* and *John* were returned; and having no idea of so great and joyful an event as the resurrection of Jesus, she sat weeping.

12. These angels had not appeared to *Peter* and *John*.

15. It is observable that *Mary* does not mention the name of Jesus. What was uppermost in her thoughts, she would naturally think was the same in those of other persons.

16. Jesus might make himself known by pronouncing the name of *Mary* more loud and distinct than he had spoken before, and perhaps with a tone of affection.

17. *Touch me not,† for I am not yet ascended‡ to my Father*; intimating that as he was not yet ascended to his Father, she would have other more proper opportunities of shewing her respect to him, and in a more proper manner: for our Lord does not seem to have permitted any such familiarity as a salutation after his resurrection.

We see that Jesus, even after his resurrection, preserved the same sentiments of affection to his disciples, and also of piety to God, that had distinguished him before. But when Jesus could use such language as this, calling the *Father* his *God*, as well as the God of his disciples, is it not extraordinary that any Christian should ever imagine that he himself was *God, equal to the Father*; or any thing more than a man, of the same nature with his apostles? *Tell my brethren,*

\* "That he was to rise again." N. T. 1729, I. p. 407. "Quia oportebat eum à mortuis resurgere." *Vulg.* See *Pearce*, I. p. 588.

† See *Bowyer*, p. 58; *Pearce*, I. p. 589.

‡ "I do not yet ascend." *Harm.* 1780, p. 252. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 124, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 409.



says he.\* And yet in a course of time divine worship came to be paid to him, as to a person equal in power and glory to him whom he here styles his *God and Father*, as well as the *God and Father of his disciples*.

## SECTION XC.

*Jesus appears to two of the Disciples as they were walking to Emmaus.*

*Mark xvi. 12, 13; Luke xxiv. 13—35.*

THE resurrection of Jesus is certainly the most important fact in the gospel history; and in proportion to its importance, the credibility of it is perhaps, when well considered, the greatest possible. I even think that it would not be difficult to shew, that no person has as yet suggested any new circumstance that would have made it so credible as it now is, at this distance of time. We may easily imagine that Jesus might have appeared so as to have made a greater impression upon the Jews, or the people of that generation in general; but it would, in consequence of that very circumstance, have appeared less credible to us at this time. For had the body of the Jewish nation been then convinced of it, and consequently have embraced Christianity, it would have been considered now and hereafter, as a contrivance of the Jewish rulers; and had the Roman governor, and the Romans in general, been converted at that time, it would have worn a still more suspicious aspect at present. It was, on this account, therefore, far better that Jesus should satisfy a sufficient number of credible witnesses only, who were

\* "It would be difficult to find words that could more plainly express that Christ really was, and that he desired to be considered in no other light, than as one of the human species; for in saying simply and naturally, that he had the same God and Father with his apostles, he acknowledges himself to have had his being from God, and to be a creature as they were. And in styling them his brethren, he owns himself a Jew, like them, and one of Abraham's descendants, or sprung alike from Adam, the first father of our race.

"There is this farther to be observed in these testimonials of Christ concerning his nature and condition of being; that they are expressions casually dropt from him, in the course of conversation, without any design of indicating any thing particular by them, or that any particular notice should be taken of them; and it is merely the long inveterate error of his followers about his person, that obliges us to seek out and produce them; for our Lord never appears in any degree to have had a thought, that mankind would take him to be any other than a human being, least of all, to be the eternal God; and therefore he never uses any precautions to obviate or guard against such strange eccentric imaginations." *Com. and Ess. I. p. 415.*

themselves indisposed to admit the fact; and this was the case even with the apostles themselves.

As to the supposition of the disciples of Jesus carrying away his body, their consternation was so great that nothing of the kind could have occurred to them. If their minds had been at liberty for any such scheme, and if they could have carried it into execution, it could not have answered their purpose of making the people believe that he was risen from the dead. For the mere removal of the body would have been no proof of that; and how could they expect to succeed even in this: for what could they have done against the guard of Roman soldiers?

In this, however, we may see the wisdom of that part of the plan of Divine Providence, which ordered that Jesus should continue in the sepulchre no longer than until the third day. Had this interval been much longer, it might have been said that the disciples might have recovered from their consternation; and that the watch becoming more remiss, they might have found an opportunity of executing their purpose.

I have observed the extreme improbability of Jesus continuing alive during the time of the preparation for his sepulchre, and his continuing swathed with spices according to the Jewish custom, while he was in the sepulchre. Had he been found alive, he must have been in a very languishing state; and yet he appeared with all the marks of perfect health several times in the course of the same day, which was the third from his death; first to *Mary*, then to *Peter*, (of the particulars of which we are not informed,) and now, we shall see, to two disciples going to *Emmaus*; and afterwards to all the disciples.

*Mark* xvi. 12. *In another form.* Probably in a different dress from that which he had usually worn.\*

*Luke* xxiv. 18.† This *Cleopas* is the same with *Alpheus*, the father of James the Less, and Judas, two of the apostles.

The crucifixion of Jesus was so much the subject of conversation, that these disciples supposed that every *stranger in Jerusalem* must have heard of it. It is no wonder that it wholly occupied their thoughts, and that the consideration of it filled them with melancholy.

\* See *Pearce*, I. p. 291; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 46, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 333.

† "Rather, 'art thou a sojourner only, in Jerusalem, and knowest not the things which have been done there,' that is, canst thou be ignorant of them, if thou hast been only for a short time there?" *Pearce*, I. p. 452. See *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 84, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 371.



21. We see here that the idea of a *Messiah* was, in the minds of the Jews, the same with that of a *person who was to redeem Israel*, or deliver them from their subjection to the Romans. We can the less wonder at the rejection of Jesus by the Scribes and Pharisees on account of his not being such a *Messiah* as this, when we find the very disciples of Jesus to have been so strongly under the same prejudice.

27. He shews them that the death and resurrection of the *Messiah* were circumstances that were not unsuitable to his character and office, as described in the prophecies in which he was mentioned, or alluded to.

31.\* They then gave more attention to his person, whereas before they had been too much occupied in their own thoughts.

33. They are called *eleven*, though Thomas was not with them.

34. Though they did not believe the first account of the resurrection of Jesus, which had been given them by *Mary Magdalene*, they appear to have had no doubts after he had been seen by *Peter*; but a second evidence of the same fact, from any other person of credit, man or woman, would certainly have impressed them more than the first.

## SECTION XCI.

### *Jesus appears to all the Apostles.*

*Mark* xvi. 14; *Luke* xxiv. 36—49; *John* xx. 19—31.

THAT we may have a more distinct idea of the order of the appearances of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection, I shall briefly recite them all, as they seem to me to have taken place; and the gradation in the evidence of the fact is not a little remarkable. At first the disciples had no expectation of any such thing, but the appearance of Jesus to some of them awakened the attention and suspicion of others, and at length his repeated appearances to them all, satisfied them all.

\* *Their eyes were opened*, "that is, they then began to know him: but it is not said here what occasioned this discovery. Perhaps it was the bringing in of lights, for it was evening: ver. 29." *Pearce*, l. p. 454.

*Vanished*, "rather disappeared, or (as *Marg.*) 'he ceased to be seen of them,' that is, 'by going away and leaving them.'" *Ibid.* See *Lardner*, XI. p. 286; *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 85, N. T. Ed. 2, l. p. 371.

“ The stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, Jesus rose, and the guard were dispersed, some time before day-break. Presently after, the women came with their spices, intending to embalm the body; but recollecting that the stone was too large for them to remove, they were at a loss what to do; when they were surprised to find it already rolled away and the body gone. Being exceedingly astonished at this, they dispersed themselves to different places, to inform the disciples of what they had seen; for it is not at all probable, that, in their present state of fear and consternation, they were all together. Mary Magdalene went to Peter and John, who immediately ran to the sepulchre, followed by Mary herself; but staying longer than they did, and looking into the sepulchre, after they were gone, she saw first the two angels, and then Jesus himself.

“ Supposing the other woman not to have quitted the garden, but to have waited for the return of Mary Magdalene, we may allow that they also were favoured with an appearance of Jesus to them, presently after the appearance to Mary, and before they had quitted the garden, when they were all permitted to embrace his feet, according to Matthew.

“ By this time, it is probable, that most of his disciples were got together, in consequence of the news they had heard, when Mary joined them, and informed them that she had seen Jesus herself; but they gave no credit to her. Some time the same day, when the disciples were separated, Jesus appeared to Peter alone, Luke xxiv. 34, who, upon this, probably assembled as many of the disciples as he could, to inform them of it. After the appearance to Peter, our Lord joined the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, and discovered himself to them; upon which they immediately returned to Jerusalem, and going to the place where the disciples were assembled, were informed by them that Jesus had appeared to Peter; and while they were giving an account of the manner in which he had made himself known to them also, Jesus himself appeared to them, and ate with them. Thomas, being informed of this, would not believe; but that day seven-night, Jesus appeared to them when Thomas was present, and was fully satisfied. After this all the disciples went to Galilee, where Jesus was seen by them, and the other disciples, many of whom resided in Galilee; and returning to Jerusalem, he



ascended to heaven in the presence of many of them, from the Mount of Olives.”\*

*Luke* xxiv. 36. This was the usual form of salutation among the Jews,† and appears to have been customary with Jesus; as, when he said, [*John* xix. 27,] “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” By *peace* was meant all kind of happiness.

37.‡ On another occasion, viz. the appearance of Jesus to his disciples on the sea, they thought *that they had seen a spirit*. Such a notion of a spirit, or an attenuated aerial substance, a kind of shadow, appears to have been the opinion of the vulgar in all ages; but it does not appear that the Jews thought these spirits to have been the souls of particular persons. Whether these spirits, or apparitions, were the same with *demons*, which were supposed to possess men, and occasion insanity, does not appear.

41. The more unexpected an event is, the stronger evidence we require of it. This event of the resurrection of their Lord and Master, though nothing could be more joyful to his disciples, appeared to them to be too great and happy to be true, and nothing but the most undeniable evidence could satisfy them with respect to it. At first they were in a kind of astonishment, or stupor, incapable of reflection, and consequently of proper conviction; and it was not till they recovered from this state of mind, that they could properly exercise their judgments. When the woman told them that their Master was risen, they considered it as an idle tale, and believed her not. How natural is all this; and how strong is the evidence arising from it to the truth of this important part of the gospel history! The writers describe real situations, and real sentiments of the human heart corresponding to those situations.§

*Have ye here any meat?* “This, and what follows about Jesus’s eating in the presence of his apostles, seems to have

\* *Observations on the Harmony*, 1780, Sect. xvi. § 3, pp. 119, 120. The Author evidently designed here to repeat this passage; though, except the few first words, it is omitted in the *Northumberland* edition.

† “Still used in the East. *Shaw’s Travels*, p. 237.” *Harm.* 1780, p. 257.

‡ “This confusion and terror did not arise from the *supernatural mode* of his introduction to them, a supposition by no means necessary; but from the unexpected appearance of the well-known form of their Master. See a similar form of speaking, ii. 38, xx. 1, xxi. 34, which will prove, that suddenness only of appearance is intended by the expression—*εση εν μεση αυτων*, presented himself in the midst of them, *ver.* 36.” *Wakefield’s Notes*, p. 86, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 372.

§ “Compare with the emotions of the apostles on this occasion those of the woman on that spoken of *Matt.* xxviii. 8.” *Ibid.*

been (as *John* has placed it, *Ch. xxi. 13*) in *Galilee*, when he appeared to them at the sea of *Tiberias*; but *Luke* has joined this to Jesus's first appearance to his apostles, which *John* has more justly separated from it."\*

42. *And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.* It does not follow that the Jews ate fish and honey together; but they offered our Lord the choice of the most delicate food that they had.†

To give them the fuller opportunity of observing him, that he was truly alive, and had the same animal functions of which he was possessed before, he ate and drank, as he had been used to do, in their presence. But whether there will be an absolute necessity for our being supported by the same kind of food after the general resurrection, we cannot certainly infer from this circumstance; as perhaps the body of Jesus had not then undergone that remarkable *change* which we are informed is to take place with respect to all men in a future state. It is evident that the wounds of Jesus were not closed, which must have been with a view to give his disciples the most satisfactory evidence of his being the same person who had been crucified; but we cannot suppose any will appear wounded and maimed after the resurrection.

44—46. The Jews, naturally enough, imagined that there were references to the *Messiah* in all their books of Scripture; and, as far as the future glorious state of their nation may be considered as comprehended in the prophecies concerning the Messiah, there are such in the books of Moses, though I do not think there is any thing of that kind in the book of *Psalms*, the authors of which do not pretend to prophecy. But since the death of the Messiah is particularly mentioned in *Daniel*, and yet his subsequent glorious reign is likewise spoken of in his writings, his resurrection from the dead is necessarily understood. In this sense, the resurrection of the Messiah was foretold by the ancient prophets, but no where that I find in a direct manner.‡ It was sufficient for Jesus to be informed that he was the Messiah. As to the particular passages in the books of Scripture relating to the Messiah, we are not told that he had any supernatural information on the subject, and therefore, with respect to *this*, he would be left to the use of his own understanding, as other Jews were.

\* *Pearce*, I. p. 455.

*Harmer*, I. p. 313. (P.)

† See *Mede* (Dis. xiii.), p. 51; *Hallett*, II. pp. 125—127; *Lardner*, V. pp. 24, 25, 27, 28.



47. *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name*, that is, in his stead, the apostles being ambassadors for him. Thus the apostle Paul, [2 Cor. v. 20,] "We are ambassadors for Christ," and "we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

John xx. 22. As the word which we render *spirit*, properly signifies *breath*, Jesus, by this expressive action of *breathing*, intimated the passage of the spirit of God from him to them.\*

23. This is not to be interpreted literally, but it expresses the office of a judge, or of a person invested with *power in general*. It could never depend upon the arbitrary pleasure of any man, to remit the sins of men that were not repented of; and if they were repented of, we know that God will remit them, whatever any man may say to the contrary.

25. The stubborn incredulity of *Thomas* is a circumstance remarkably favourable to the complete evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. It was only the evidence of his own actually feeling and handling of him, and not that of his hearing or seeing, that would satisfy him.

26. Upon the whole, it is most probable that Jesus entered into the room in some miraculous manner, perhaps opening the door invisibly.† But we can by no means infer, from this fact, though some have supposed it, that he passed through the door while it was shut; and therefore that our bodies will be of a similar spiritual nature in a future state. In other respects the body of Jesus was not changed; and, as it could be felt and handled, it must have been capable of *resistance*, and therefore incapable of passing through any other substance.

28. *My Lord, and my God!* This is an exclamation, or imperfect sentence, which does not *assert* that Christ is God; but seems intended to express, in an abrupt manner, *Thomas's* astonishment at the power of God, manifested in the raising his Lord from the dead.‡

It is acknowledged that no Jew ever expected any other than a man for their *Messiah*. The apostles must necessarily therefore have considered Jesus as such, all the time of their conversing with him before his death, and surely his having

\* "A divine power and commission to preach the gospel." Wakefield's *Notes*, p. 124, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 409.

† See ver. 19; Hallett, II. p. 211.

‡ "Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia (394), in his Commentary upon St. John's Gospel, says, 'that Thomas did not call *Christ* Lord and God; but being astonished at the great miracle of his resurrection, and the full evidence of it which had been afforded to him, he praised God, who had raised Christ from the dead. Nor is the being raised from the dead a proof of Deity.'" Lardner, IV. pp. 514, 515.

died would not tend to convince them that he was God.\* And as to his resurrection, the Jews expected the same for all men. It is not even certain that by *Lord*, Thomas meant Jesus.†

29. Very few could have the opportunity of *seeing* Jesus after his resurrection, and thereby having such evidence of the truth of this fact as *Thomas* had. Jesus might also mean to intimate, that his resurrection was not in itself so very improbable a thing, but that, with a proper disposition of mind, even less evidence than Thomas had would have been sufficient to make it credible.

31. ‡ As by the phrase, *Jesus being the Christ*, in the *epistles* of *John*, he certainly means to oppose the doctrine of the Gnostics, who held that Christ was a super-angelic being, who either descended into Jesus, or assumed the form of a man only, it is probable that, by the same phrase, the same writer meant the same thing; and therefore he is to be understood as intending to say that, in his opinion, such a history of Jesus as he had given would satisfy any person that Jesus was properly a *man*, like other men; and that this *man*, without any thing superadded to him, was *the Christ*, or the Messiah.

The proper end of the evangelical history is to convince mankind of the divine mission, or Messiahship, of Jesus; and the end of this is obedience to his gospel, which will insure our immortal life and happiness. With this sentiment the apostle seems to have intended to close his gospel. The next and last chapter was probably added afterwards, as a supplement to it; containing a more particular account of the first appearance of Jesus in Galilee, which had been omitted by himself, as well as by the other evangelists.

## PARAPHRASE.

*John* xx. (23.) With the Holy Spirit which shall be sent upon you, I shall give you authority and power in my church,

\* Yet the intelligent *Maundrell*, under the influence of his system, describing *Calvary*, speaks of "the suffering of the God of Nature." See his *Journey*, p. 73.

† "This exclamation is in the *vocative case*: for so these writers often express themselves: see *Mat.* xi. 26, and many other places. And I look upon the full construction of the passage to be this: *Και ειπεν αυτος· Ο Κυριος μου και ειπεν· Ο Θεος μου*: so that the *και*—is put in by the evangelist to distinguish the two exclamations, and is no part of what *Thomas* said. Of this also we have already met with a variety of specimens: see *Acts* i. 20." *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 125, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 409. See *Whitby's Last Thoughts*, (Pt. ii.) in *Matthews's Recorder*, II. pp. 166, 167.

‡ "I prefer the order of the Arabic translator in this place: *And that ye may have life through this belief in his name.*" *Wakefield's Notes*, p. 125, N. T. Ed. 2, I. p. 409.



to receive into it, and to cast out of it, whom you shall judge proper; and as you will be under the direction of the Holy Spirit, God himself will confirm your decisions.\*

## SECTION XCII.

*Jesus appears to his Disciples in Galilee.*

*Matt.* xxviii. 16, 17; *John* xxi. 1—25.

JESUS, in order to give the most undeniable evidence of his resurrection, appeared frequently to his disciples after he rose from the dead. The apostle Paul mentions eleven distinct appearances in all. In most of them Jesus took his disciples, as it were, by surprise, appearing to them when they did not expect him; and to such appearances, which were the first, there could not be the least objection, as it could not be said they went to the interview with their minds prepossessed with any expectation of the kind, and were therefore more easily to be imposed upon. But one of the appearances was by particular appointment; and this was in *Galilee*, where he had spent the greatest part of his public ministry, and where he was therefore the most generally known; and to this meeting all the disciples of Jesus without distinction had access; and, according to *Paul*, [1 *Cor.* xv. 6,] more than *five hundred* persons attended, and therefore, of a public appearance, it was the most unexceptionable that can be imagined, since all the disciples, having previous knowledge of it, would naturally go prepared to get that particular evidence which would best satisfy themselves. Besides, as this very public meeting could be no secret, it is not improbable but that some of the enemies of Jesus might attend and be convinced. This appearance is said to have been upon a mountain in *Galilee*, and therefore may be the same on which he delivered what is called the sermon on the Mount.

*Matt.* xxviii. 16. This public appearance of Jesus is only slightly mentioned by *Matthew*, who also only mentions *the eleven* being there, though it can hardly be doubted that it was the same time at which Paul says that he was seen by more than five hundred at once. On this account, however, it would appear less necessary to give so particular an account of this meeting, as of those at which the eleven apostles, or only a few persons, attended.

\* See the note on *Matt.* xvi. 19, (*P.*) *supra*, p. 184.

17. *Neither did they doubt any longer.\** As Matthew could hardly mean that any of this company, who met Jesus by appointment, had any doubt of his resurrection, *after the interview*, it is most probable, notwithstanding the literal construction of his words, that his meaning was, that these doubts preceded the interview.† The apostles, who had the best opportunity of satisfying themselves concerning the fact, were abundantly convinced of the truth of the resurrection before this time, even *Thomas*, the most incredulous of them all. But whatever might be the case with respect to some of this particular company, the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus was such as to remove all doubts from many thousands who were not present, but who only heard the evidence of it from the apostles, and others, at and after the day of Pentecost, and who saw the miracles wrought by the apostles. And the evidence which satisfied *them*, indisposed as all the Jews were to admit a fact of this kind, who had all the necessary means of judging of it, and the strongest motives, respecting both this life and the future one, not to take up their opinion on slight grounds, ought to satisfy *us*. There is no other kind of evidence of any past transaction whatever.

But there is another appearance of Jesus in *Galilee*, of which *John* only gives any account, and this was without particular notice, and was therefore unexpected. It probably preceded the public meeting mentioned by *Matthew* and *Paul*.

*John* xxi. 3. The apostles had probably gone to Galilee with a view to meet Jesus according to his appointment, and that they might not pass their time in idleness, they chose to employ themselves in their former occupation of fishermen.

6. This circumstance, so similar to another on the same sea, would naturally bring to their minds the former miracle, and make them consider more attentively who it was that was speaking to them. This extraordinary draught of fishes may be also considered as an emblem of their success, when they should be, what Jesus upon a former occasion [*Matt.* iv. 19, *Mark* i. 17] called them, *fishers of men*.

7. *Naked*, that is, without his upper garment.‡

\* *Beza* in his last edition. The *Prussian* version has, *They worshipped him, even those who had doubted*. Dr. *Owen*, in *Bowyer*. (P.) See *Bowyer*, (1763,) p. 18; *Lardner*, IV. pp. 296, 297.

† See *Pearce*, I. p. 206; *Wakefield*, p. 412.

‡ See *Le Cene*, p. 584; *Essay*, 1727, p. 280; *Pearce*, I. p. 594.



9. *And fish.* It may be rendered *food*, or *victuals in general*.\*

15. † Though Jesus had a particular interview with Peter, which no doubt satisfied him of his having forgiven him for his cowardly desertion of him, in consideration of his bitter repentance, he thought proper, by this manner of speaking to him before the eleven, to reprove him (though with great gentleness) for his former confidence, in saying that *though all men would forsake him, yet would not he*; as if he had had greater love for his Master, and a stronger attachment to him, than the other apostles. Also, what Jesus said upon this occasion would satisfy all his brethren, that, notwithstanding his late fall, he had no doubt of his doing his duty as a faithful preacher of the gospel, and that he would not shrink even from a violent death for his sake.

17. As Peter had denied Christ *three times*, it is observable that our Lord made him repeat his profession of love to him three times.

18. When Jesus said this, Peter had probably pulled off his wet clothes, and was *girding* his dry garments, which would give a proper occasion, according to Jesus's manner, to give this prediction.‡

19. *This said he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* Peter is said to have suffered martyrdom at Rome, being crucified with his head downwards; but the fact is questioned by many. It is probable, however, that Peter had suffered martyrdom at the time of John's writing this, and that the circumstances of it were well known.

21. This was a very improper curiosity, and as such is reproved by Jesus.

22. That is, *What is it to thee*, whether he die at all, or not?

It should seem, from Jesus's intimating that it depended upon *himself* whether John should die or not, that he had some important part to act on the theatre of this world before his *coming with power and great glory*, to take possession of his proper *kingdom*; and his appearances to *Paul*, and the instructions he gave him, are some evidences of this. But it is wisely concealed from us what this part is; probably lest it should lead to improper regards. Our business is with our own conduct, and our prayers are to be directed,

\* *Pearce*, I. p. 594. (P.) "So also ver. 13." *Ibid.*

† See *Bowyer*, p. 59; *Pearce*, I. pp. 595, 596; *Wakefield's Evidences* (Rem. xxvii.), pp. 139—142.

‡ *Markland*. (P.)

not to Christ, but to *his Father and our Father, to his God and our God.*

*Tarry till I come*; meaning probably till the destruction of Jerusalem, an event which it is said *John*, and, it is thought, no other apostle, survived.

25. *Would not contain.* Some would render this, *would not receive* : \* but it seems to have been a mere hyperbolical expression, common enough with other writers. Besides, if the world would not receive what the evangelist did write, how could he expect they would receive what he could have added ? † It seems to mean that the work would be too voluminous for the generality of readers, and would rather disgust them.

The facts contained in all the gospels taken together, (and *John* had probably seen the other three, and the evidence on which they rest,) were, in the opinion of this apostle, sufficient to convince all candid persons of the divine mission of Jesus, and every thing beyond this was justly deemed superfluous. If any persons be so disposed as that reasonable evidence will not satisfy them, they are answerable for all the consequences of their unbelief.

### SECTION XCIII.

*Jesus gives his final Instructions to his Apostles, and ascends to Heaven.*

*Matt.* xxviii. 18—20 ; *Mark* xvi. 15—20 ; *Luke* xxiv. 50—53 ; *Acts* i. 3—11.

I AM now come to the last scene of the gospel history, viz. the final instructions that Jesus gave to his apostles, and his ascension into heaven. He had continued with them after his resurrection, what may certainly be deemed to be a sufficient time for giving them every reasonable satisfaction with respect to that event : for, as he appeared frequently, and in different circumstances, they who had not an opportunity of making proper observations at one time, might have it at another ; so that there can be no doubt but that, incredulous as all of them were on the subject, he left them perfectly satisfied with respect to it.

The nature of the thing admits of no evidence of this fact, but that of those who were afterwards the friends of Christ,

\* *Wakefield.* See *Impr. Vers.* p. 275.

† *Pearce*, I. pp. 588, 589. (P.) See *Le Cene*, pp. 590—592.



because it was impossible for any person to be convinced of the truth of his resurrection, and remain an enemy to him. But if by enemies we mean those who had been unbelievers in the resurrection, we must include all the apostles themselves, and especially Paul, who, from being an inveterate persecutor of Christians, became the most active promoter of Christianity.

*Luke* xxiv. 50. That is, the precincts of *Bethany*, on the Mount of Olives, which lay between Bethany and Jerusalem. It was the same mountain from which he had delivered his awful prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple, and the desolation of Judea.\*

*Mark* xvi. 15. It is something extraordinary that, notwithstanding this solemn and express commission to *preach the gospel to the whole creation*, that is, to all mankind, the apostles should still imagine that it was to be preached to the Jews only; and that it should require a particular interposition of Providence to enlighten their minds on the subject. They no doubt understood him to mean, that they were to preach to Jews in all parts of the world.

16. There are so many passages of Scripture (indeed the whole tenor of it) that confine the happiness of heaven to the righteous, and exclude from it all vicious persons, that it is impossible to suppose that this is not implied, though it be not directly expressed, in this particular place.

17, 18. The miracles here specified, are such as imply that the apostles would succeed in the very same powers which had been committed to himself, especially that of casting out *demons*, or curing insanity, which was always justly considered as of a peculiarly wonderful nature. Some of these particulars, as that of their speaking *with new tongues*, had not been exemplified in Jesus himself; and on this account he might say [*John* xiv. 12] that, after the descent of the Spirit, they would be enabled to do even *greater things than he had done*. We have no account of the *taking up serpents*, which implies their being bitten by them, without receiving any hurt, but in the history of Paul [*Acts* xxviii. 5], after a shipwreck on the isle of *Malta*. Of their *drinking deadly things*, or poisonous draughts, without receiving hurt, we have no particular account in what is left us of the history of the apostles; but this is very little.

*Matt.* xxviii. 18. It is probable, from several of our Saviour's parables, that the *power*, which he says here was

\* See *Matt.* xxiv. 3; *Mark* xiii. 34; *supra*, pp. 293, 294; *Wotton*, J. p. 288.

given to him *in heaven and in earth*, is not to be fully exercised till his second coming with power and great glory, at the day of judgment; he being now, to adopt his own language, [*Luke xix. 12,*] *gone to receive his kingdom*, or to be invested with it. But notwithstanding this, it appears that during the age of the apostles, though probably not since that time, he had something to do in this world, as appears by his being seen of *Paul*, and the instructions that he gave to him.\*

19. It does not appear that the apostles understood that these particular words were always to be pronounced at baptism; for, whenever this rite is spoken of in the book of *Acts*, baptism is always said to be administered *in the name of Christ only*.† Afterwards, great virtue was supposed to attend the pronounciation of these words by persons duly qualified; and, therefore, they are annexed to all *the seven sacraments*, as they are called, of the Church of Rome. Even in the celebration of marriage, of which the Church of Rome made a sacrament, and in consequence of which, that which is nothing more than a *civil contract* must be entered into in the presence of the clergy, and by certain ceremonies performed by them only, a man and woman are pronounced to be *man and wife, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. In like manner *absolution* is given by the popish priests, and also by the clergy of the Church of England, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*.

It is therefore certainly far better, in order to avoid superstition, to express the same meaning in other words, and to baptize as the apostles did, *in the name of Christ*, or into the Christian religion, as that religion which was the gift

\* See *supra*, p. 272.

† “La plus part des Chrétiens s'imaginent qu'ils ne seroient ni Chrétiens, ni baptizés si l'on n'avoit employé ces mêmes paroles dont on a fait un formulaire pour cette occasion, quoi qu'il soit manifeste par l'exemple de ceux que les apôtres ont baptizés qu'ils ne s'en servoient pas, puisque plusieurs de ceux qu'ils avoient baptizés, ne sçavoient pas même s'il y avoit un Saint Esprit, ou si le S. Esprit étoit donné.” *Le Cene*, pp. 712, 713.

“It cannot be reasonably supposed that our Lord would command his apostles to begin with teaching any mysterious doctrine to their converts. The design of the words is this: that they should teach men to receive and profess the doctrine which Jesus had taught with authority from God the Father, and confirmed by miracles done by the finger, the power, or the spirit of God. Accordingly we are assured, (*Acts ii. 38; viii. 16; xix. 5,*) that men were baptized *in the name of Jesus Christ*, or *into his name*; which imports the same as being baptized into the belief that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; or that he taught by divine authority.” *Lardner*, VIII. p. 409.

See *Wakefield*, pp. 413, 414; also his *Plain and Short Account*, pp. 50—52.



of God, by Jesus Christ, confirmed by miracles, or the Holy Spirit.\*

That baptism in the name of Christ was not considered as any proof of his divinity, is evident from Paul's speaking of the Israelites as *baptized unto Moses*.†

20. *End of the world*; literally, *the end of the age*, by which some think is meant the end of the Jewish polity, or the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, to which they say this extraordinary assistance given to the apostles was limited.‡ But I see no sufficient reason for confining this promise to that time, and there is a sense in which it is applicable to all times; and the end of the age, *του αἰῶνος*, does sometimes signify the period of the duration of the world; and, as I have observed, those events were apprehended to be nearer than they have appeared to be.

*Luke* xxiv. 53. That is, they attended *in the Temple*, frequently, as at the times of morning and evening sacrifice, along with other pious Jews, who perhaps joined the *Levites* in their singing of psalms during the act of sacrificing. Or they might pass much of their time in the courts and precincts of the Temple, as Jesus did, during a great part of the day; for at night the gates were shut and guarded.

## PARAPHRASE.

*Mark* xvi. (16.) Whosoever shall embrace Christianity, which will be by the ceremony of baptism, and shall act according to it, shall be saved; but he to whom it shall be proposed with sufficient evidence, and who shall not receive it, shall be condemned.

Thus I close the history of our Saviour, a history with which all Christians cannot be too minutely acquainted, and shall proceed to that of the apostles, as it is delivered in the book of *Acts*, which was written by *Luke*, in continuation of his Gospel.

\* See *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 116, 147, 148.

† 1 *Cor.* x. 2. "Was *Moses*, therefore, the God of the Israelites, and equal to *Jehovah*? A proper idea of that text will explain this." *Wakefield*, p. 413.

‡ See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 64.

## ACTS.

**NEXT** to the *Gospels*, which contain an account of the doctrine, the miracles, the death and the resurrection of Christ, there is no part of the New Testament of so much real value as this book of *Acts*, which shews in what manner the promises of our Saviour to the apostles were fulfilled, and how far his predictions relating to the propagation of his gospel were accomplished. We here find that the apostles were actually *baptized with the Holy Spirit*, as *John the Baptist* foretold, and our Saviour confirmed; in consequence of which they were endued with the power of working miracles, and their preaching had a very great and extensive effect; at the same time that the preachers met with all that opposition and persecution of which their Master had apprized them.

As this book of *Acts* was written by *Luke*, after his Gospel, and it ends before the death of *Paul*, viz. at his imprisonment at Rome in the time of Nero, there can be no doubt but that his gospel was written some time before the destruction of Jerusalem; and it is observable that our Saviour's prophecy of this remarkable event, as related by *Luke*, is more circumstantial than that of any other of the evangelists.

As to the authenticity of this book of *Acts*, it is of the highest kind; being quoted by the earliest writers, especially *Clemens* of Rome, who is mentioned by Paul. Indeed its authenticity was never called in question in any early age.

No books whatever were so properly and effectually published as the *Gospels*, and this book of *Acts*. Indeed all the *facts* of which they contain an account, may be said to have been published long before the books were written. For the *preaching of the gospel*, by the apostles, consisted, no doubt, chiefly of their reciting the particulars of the life of Christ, of which they were the appointed witnesses; so that the *Gospels* contain the subject of their preaching, which commenced immediately after the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. There was, therefore, the best opportunity of examining into the truth of every thing that they related. And had the written *Gospels*, when



they were published, been found to differ from what was known to thousands to have been related by the apostles, it could not fail to have been observed, and of course the books would have lost all credit.

These *Gospels* and the book of *Acts* being similar to the *Pentateuch*, and other books of the Old Testament, which contain a history of the Jewish religion, were immediately read by Christians in all places of public worship, which were open to enemies as well as friends. Was it possible, then, for these books to be so generally known, while so many thousands of persons, perfectly well acquainted with the transactions recorded in them, had never heard of the particulars contained in them, and be handed down as they have been to us, without any contradiction; and when both the friends and the enemies of Christianity were equally interested to discover the truth?

CHAP. I. 2.\* It is evident from this passage, as well as numberless others in the New Testament, that our Saviour did not teach, or work miracles, by any power of *his own*. It is here said that it was *by the holy spirit*, or the power of God, the same power which, according to his promise, was afterwards communicated to the apostles, and by which they were enabled, as he had told them, to perform miracles equal to his.†

4. They were no more to disperse to their several occupations, as they seem to have done after his resurrection.

5. If we may suppose that there was any analogy between the manner of administering these two *baptisms*, as they are called, viz. that of spirit and that of water, the water in the latter case must have been thrown upon them in baptism, and dipping, or plunging, could not have been necessary; for the emblem of the descent of the Spirit was a flame of fire, which descended upon each of them. I cannot help thinking that this sprinkling of water must have been used when great numbers were baptized by a single person, and for this they would have a precedent in the conduct of Moses, who is said to have sprinkled the book of the law, and all the people.

6, 7. We see how strongly the apostles retained the idea of the temporal reign of the *Messiah*. Jesus, not thinking it a proper time for their information, gave only a general

\* "Or, as in the *Syriac* version, 'after he had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen by the Holy Spirit.'" *Lardner*, XI. p. 150. See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

† See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 121.

answer to their question.\* Indeed, he plainly gave them to understand that he was not able to give them a particular answer; the time of his future coming to take possession of his kingdom, at which time he will raise the dead and judge the world, not being communicated even to himself, but being known to *the Father only*, as he had expressly told them once before.

8. It was the proper qualification of the apostles that they should be the most competent *witnesses* of the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ. In common with other Christians, they were endued with the holy spirit; but it was peculiar to them to have the power of conferring it upon others, by the imposition of their hands.

10. It is probable, from the circumstances here mentioned, that the ascent of Jesus was leisurely, so that all who were present might observe it very distinctly.

11. As there is no appearance of any figure of speech in what the angels here say, as our Saviour himself said that he should return in *the clouds of heaven* with power and great glory; and the apostle says that at the resurrection the living and the dead shall be *caught up together to meet the Lord in the air*; there can hardly be any doubt but that Jesus will return literally as he ascended, so as to be first visible in the air. Whether that will be the theatre of the general judgment, when the righteous shall be separated from the wicked, we are not informed.

14. This is the last time that *the mother of Jesus* is mentioned; and it is without any particular distinction or respect. That she should afterwards come to be idolized, and divine honours be paid to her, as is done in the Church of Rome at this day, is not a little extraordinary. But it naturally followed the making a God of her son, and paying him divine honours; and the whole system of this *Christian idolatry* rose naturally from the principles of philosophy and heathenism, which prevailed at the time of the promulgation of Christianity.

16. Though *Peter* probably imagined that *David*, or the spirit of God speaking by him, referred to the case of *Judas*, it does not seem probable that the passage here quoted had that original reference, but that it was peculiarly suitable to the case of *Judas*, so as to induce the apostles to take their measures in pursuance of it.† When they did proceed

\* "Our Lord's answer may intimate it should at length be *restored*, though not immediately, or with all the circumstances they imagined." *Doddridge*.

† See *Jeffrey's Review*, 1726, pp. 179, 180; *Doddridge*.



to act from this principle, in the choice of another apostle, [*ver.* 26,] they were not endued with any miraculous power, or, as far as appears, acted by any divine direction. It would, however, appear afterwards, as no doubt it did, that *Matthias* was a proper apostle, having the peculiar powers of one.

II. Jesus being ascended into heaven, the apostles and other disciples continued, according to his directions, at Jerusalem, spending their time much together, in acts of devotion, especially frequenting the Temple, like other devout Jews. But this could only be for the space of ten days; for Jesus appeared to them during forty days after his resurrection, and only fifty days intervened between the Passover and Pentecost, from which it derives its name. We call it *Whitsuntide*, and the season of Passover, *Easter*.

1. At this feast of *Pentecost*, immediately following the Passover at which Jesus was crucified, and after which he rose from the dead,\* the proper promulgation of the Gospel commenced, and it was wisely appointed in the course of Divine Providence, that every thing relating to the publication of it should be attended with the fullest evidence, nothing, as the apostle Paul afterwards observed, being done in a corner. At the time, therefore, of this public festival, one of the three, on which all the Jews who were of age were required to give their attendance at Jerusalem, and to which numbers of other Jews from all parts of the world voluntarily resorted, the apostles, our Lord's successors, were endued with the holy spirit in a manner the most conspicuous and illustrious.

Chronologers have computed that this was probably the first day of the week, or the *Lord's day*, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, and on which he seems to have made his principal appearances to the apostles afterwards. It is no wonder, therefore, that this day should be distinguished by Christians by this peculiar appellation, and that on this day they should hold their assemblies for public worship; though for a long time all Christians held assemblies for the same purpose on the *Jewish Sabbath*, or Saturday; all the Jewish Christians, naturally and properly having continued their former custom, and the Gentile Christians following their example.

It is remarkable that it was about the time of Pentecost

\* See *Wotton*, I. pp. 204, 205.

that the law of Moses was given from Mount Sinai, in the most solemn and public manner, before the whole nation of the Jews. But in fact, the effusion of the spirit upon the apostles and other Christians on this day of Pentecost was an event more fully authenticated than that of the promulgation of the law of Moses, as this was known in the first instance to persons from all parts of the world, who would, of course, mention the extraordinary particulars at their return to their respective countries; and this would, no doubt, prepare the minds of many for the reception of the gospel, when it was preached to them afterwards.\*

The *all* here mentioned were probably the *hundred and twenty*, spoken of before, [*Chap. i. 15*].

2. It is probable that this *sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind*,† was perceived on the outside of the house, and that this might occasion the great concourse of people who were so soon drawn together.

3. This was probably something similar to the visible appearance attending the descent of the spirit upon our Saviour, [*Matt. iii. 16*].

4. It is not perhaps possible to imagine any thing more indisputably miraculous than speaking intelligibly in a language that a person has not learned. In this respect it will probably be thought to exceed any miracle exhibited by Jesus himself, and therefore may be said to be in part a fulfilment of his promise to the apostles, [*John xiv. 12*,] that they should *do greater things than he had done*; though his meaning might be, that they would extend the knowledge of the gospel farther, and make more converts than he should do.

This miracle of *the gift of tongues* seems to have been very common in the age of the apostles, but it does not appear to have been given for any particular use, as for that of preaching the gospel in foreign nations, &c., but merely to answer the purpose of any other temporary miracle, being the most indisputable proof of the presence of God with the preachers of the gospel.

7. It was sufficiently known that the apostles, and the other persons who were assembled on this occasion, were natives of Judea, and chiefly of *Galilee*, and it is probable that they had none of them ever been out of the country. And there could not be more proper judges of their speaking

\* See *Doddridge*.

† See *Peares*.



the languages correctly, than the natives of the country in which they were spoken.

9\*—11. Though the natives of these countries did not speak languages radically different from each other, they probably differed so much, that they could not, without particular instruction, converse together.

13.† These were probably Jews of Jerusalem, who, not understanding any of the foreign languages spoken by the company, thought that they were uttering inarticulate sounds.

15. This was our nine o'clock in the morning,‡ at which time it was so unusual in this part of the world for any person to be found drinking to excess, that the very mention of the circumstance appears to be sufficient to confute the suggestion. It is also said that on these public festivals the Jews generally abstained from eating or drinking till the afternoon.§

16. We are now attending to the important history of the first promulgation of the gospel, after the descent on the day of Pentecost. I have observed that a clearer evidence of supernatural power could not perhaps be given them by persons speaking languages which they had not been taught: that this could not be the effects of intoxication, needs no arguing. Besides, what these persons delivered in these languages were sentences expressive of the praises of God. This miracle may be likewise considered as emblematical of the reception of the gospel by people of all nations and languages. In the idea of Peter, it was a literal accomplishment of a prophecy of *Joel*,|| concerning God's pouring out his spirit upon all flesh in the latter days, which prophecy he recited at full length.

We see upon this and many other similar occasions, how conversant the Jews were with their Scriptures, so that they could quote and apply them on all occasions. This ready quoting from memory, will account for their frequently giving the general sense, and not the exact words of Scripture, and likewise for their frequently fancying that par-

\* On the probable false reading (*ver.* 9) *Judea*, see *Bowyer, Pearce, Impr. Vers.*

† See Sir T. Brown's *Misc. Tracts*, No. I. Sect. xxi.; *Le Clerc*; *Harmer*, I. p. 389.

‡ See *Le Clerc*; *Le Cene*, pp. 282, 283; *Essay*, 1727, p. 289.

§ See *Josephus's Life*, Sect. liv.; *Lardner*, I. p. 205; *Theol. Repos.* IV. p. 119; *Doddridge*.

|| *Chap.* ii. 28—32. See Vol. XII. p. 356; *Doddridge*.

ticular passages of Scripture had an original reference to any circumstances to which they might be *applied*. As the Scriptures were always upon their minds, they would often be struck with analogies of this kind, and would naturally enough be apt to lay too much stress upon them.

17. The *latter days*, or the *last times*, in the ancient prophets, are commonly supposed to refer to the time of the gospel in general;\* though many of the passages clearly refer to a period not yet come, viz. the return of the Jews to their own country, or those glorious times when *the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and of Christ*.

20. This seems to refer to the time of the desolation of Judea, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which our Lord foretold in language similar to this.

22. It is impossible not to observe that Peter, meaning, no doubt, in his circumstances, to speak of his Master in the highest terms, only says, that he was "a man approved of God, by miraculous works which God did by him."† Certainly, therefore, he had no higher idea of him than he here expresses, and least of all could he suppose that he was properly God. Had he even considered his Master as being of an angelic or super-angelic nature, he would hardly have spoken so degradingly of him, as to call him merely a *man*, and to say that he performed his miracles by no power of his own, but by the immediate power of God acting by him. Had our Saviour been the creator of the world, as some suppose, and had he originally and naturally powers equal to it, his power of working miracles must have been as much *his own*, as that of speaking and walking is ours; and though it is true we cannot perform these natural functions without power derived originally from God, yet God is not therefore said to speak or act by us. God, therefore, being said to act by Christ, clearly implies that he had not *naturally*, or in his proper nature, any power of doing such things. And if, as Peter here says, and our Saviour himself before him, God really did the works, no extraordinary instrument or medium was necessary. A man approved of God for that purpose was all that was requisite. Besides, there was certainly a propriety in his being a man

\* "Les Juifs remarquent que lors qu'il est parlé des *derniers jours* ces termes désignent seulement le tems du Messie." *Le Cene*, p. 35; *Essay*, 1727, p. 20. See *Doddridge*.

† See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 423.



like ourselves, who was sent on this message from God to man, and especially one who was to exhibit an example of a proper resurrection of man from the dead.

23. According to the Arabic version it is, *when ye had mocked, ye slew him.*\*

We see that notwithstanding it was foreseen and fore-ordained of God, that Christ should die in the manner that he did; yet the wickedness of his murderers was not the less on that account.† Guilt arises from bad passions and bad views, and from these the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews certainly acted.

24.‡ This impossibility of Christ continuing in the power of death, could not arise from any natural power that he had of resisting death, but from the determination of God, expressed by our Saviour himself.

30. The clause, *according to the flesh raise up Christ*, is not in many MSS., nor acknowledged by several of the ancient versions.§

31. According to all appearance, and the natural construction of the passage in the *Psalm* [xvi. 10] that is here quoted, David thought of no other than himself when he composed it; expressing his confidence that God would not deliver him up to the power of his enemies, to be put to death by them. But the passage being more literally applicable to the case of our Saviour, Peter supposed that there was an original reference to it. It is not, however, necessary that, as Christians, we should consider Peter as speaking by divine inspiration on this occasion; and he might very naturally imagine that in the passage he quoted there was an allusion to the case of our Saviour when there was not. In all such cases as these we must judge for ourselves, as well as he.

34. It is plain that Peter considered *David* as not being *in heaven*, but only in the grave, after he was dead, waiting for a happy resurrection in God's own time, when we ourselves, though dying later, shall rise together with Peter, and all who have gone before us, viz. when Christ shall return, and take all his faithful followers to himself, that *where he is, there they may be also*.

\* Wakefield. (P.)

† See *Le Clerc*; *Le Cene*, pp. 474, 475; *Essay*, 1727, p. 62; *Hallett*, II. pp. 286—292; *Bowyer*.

‡ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Pilkington*, p. 207.

§ Wakefield. (P.) See *Le Cene*, p. 564; *Pearce*,

36. That is, a proper king, the proper *Messiah* of the Jews, though not such an one as we vainly promised ourselves.

39. *To all your furthestmost posterity.\**

By those who are *afar off*, we might naturally think that Peter meant the Gentiles; but at that time he had no idea of the gospel being intended for them. He only meant the Jews who were dispersed in remote countries, or proselytes to Judaism.

41. Many of these, no doubt, had been discouraged, and dispersed, by his unexpected death. Besides those who actually joined themselves to this new-formed Christian society by baptism, there must also have been great numbers who thought well of Christianity, though they had not the courage openly to avow it.

42. As the *breaking of bread* is here joined with prayer,† it is probable that the rite of the Lord's Supper is here referred to.‡

43. At this time the high-priests and rulers who had crucified Jesus, and who had enjoyed their triumph over him, were perplexed and overawed, seeing the cause of Christ reviving, and even becoming popular.

44. This must be understood, we shall find, with some limitations.§ It could only mean an uncommon degree of liberality, which was of particular value at that season, when a great proportion of the converts were poor; for *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were under no obligation to sell their estate, or to give any part of the price of it. It was altogether a voluntary act.

47. *The people* with whom the new converts *had favour* must have been those who thought well of Christ, but did not openly avow themselves Christians; while those who are said to have been *added to the Church* were baptized. The phrase *such as should be saved*, or *the saved*, as it might have been rendered, is only synonymous to *Christians*; as *Paul* says, (1 Cor. i. 18,) *to us who are saved*, that is, to us Christians, *Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God*. Christians are called *saved*, as having the gospel, which is the means or instrument of salvation. But you need not be informed that many persons have this instrument, and yet, powerful and efficacious as it is, make no use of it, and will be so far from being finally saved,

\* *Wakefield. (P.)*

† "Communicatione fractionis panis, et orationibus." *Vulg.* See *Mede*, p. 364.

‡ See *Le Clerc, Doddridge*.

§ See *Doddridge*.



that their condemnation will be aggravated by it. To derive any advantage from Christianity, we must give diligent attention to it, and regulate our lives by it, having the precepts and promises of it in frequent contemplation. Without this it is impossible that it should have any real influence over us, so as to make us *other persons* than we should have been without it, that is, *mere men of the world*, having our views terminating in this life, without giving a just preference to the life which is to come.

Let it be our endeavour to be Christians in all the proper forms of a Christian society, as by the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which, in the time we are now reading of, was certainly universal with those who pretended to be Christians at all, but more especially, let us be careful to pass from the *form* to the *substance*.

III. As it is not very probable that after the effusion of the holy spirit, or the communication of miraculous powers to the apostles, (from which we may date their proper commission to preach the gospel, and to succeed to the office and the powers of Christ on earth,) they continued long without exercising them, and preaching with the authority which they derived from them, we may safely conclude that the transactions mentioned in this chapter followed soon after those that are recited in the preceding. We may therefore presume that they took place during the same public festival of *Pentecost*, while Jerusalem continued to be crowded with visitors from all parts of the world.

1. Pious Jews in general had *three* seasons of prayer in the course of the day, at noon, as well as at the time of morning and evening sacrifice.\* Thus *David* says, "At morning, at evening and at noon, will I pray and give thanks." It was *Daniel's* custom also to pray three times with his face directed to Jerusalem, and *Peter* we shall find praying at noon, when he was sent for by *Cornelius*. It must be observed, however, that prayers which were so frequent could not be of long continuance, so as to interfere with the proper business of the day.

3, 4. I have before observed, that there could not be a more proper subject of a miracle of a public and unquestionable nature than a public beggar, such persons, and their cases, being the most generally known.

6. Had Jesus been an impostor, and had there been a probability of gaining wealth, power, or fame, by any thing

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

that he taught, why did not the apostles (who must have been in the secret of the imposture, and who, upon this scheme, must have been possessed of advantages superior to those of Jesus himself, having known all that he did) speak and act in their own name, now that he was out of the way, and had no power of controuling them? On the contrary, we see that all of them in the midst of the greatest hardships and persecution, and often differing among themselves, persisted to act in the name of a crucified Master, and by authority derived from him. And yet the apostles were not men void of ambition; and before the death of Jesus they were frequently contending among themselves *who should be the greatest*.

11. This was a magnificent portico, built originally by *Solomon*,\* to support which, he raised immense stone buttresses from the very bottom of the valley which separated the hill of *Moriah*, on which the Temple stood, from the Mount of Olives. This immense work, which is particularly described by *Josephus*, was all that remained of the Temple of Solomon in his time; but even of this nothing is remaining at this day.

13. It was a maxim with the Jews, that if a man was a *sinner*, and especially an impostor, God would not hear him. This gave the man who had been blind from his birth so much advantage in his argument with the Jewish rulers: "we know," says he, "that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a doer of his will, him he heareth."

15.† In this, Peter might allude to the character of the *Messiah* (as he would probably understand it to be) in the prophet *Isaiah*, which, as we translate it, is *the eternal Father*, but as it may be rendered *the Father* (that is, the author) of *eternity*, or the giver of eternal life, which Christ, by a power derived from God, bestows upon his faithful followers.

17. It was true that the Jews were *ignorant* that Jesus was the *Messiah*, and this opinion even the disciples of Jesus gave up at the time of his death; but all the Jews had evidence enough of his being a prophet, or a person sent of God, and therefore their guilt in putting him to death admits of no apology. Jesus claimed to be the Mes-

\* See *John* x. 23.

† "Le mot *αρχηγος*, signifie proprement un chef et un conducteur, ou celui qui fait le premier quelque chose. En effet Jesus Christ est le premier, qui sous la nouvelle alliance ait été mis en possession de la vie glorieuse dans le ciel. Voyez le *Ch. v. 31*; et *Ileb. ii. 10*; *xii. 2*." *Le Clerc*.



siah when he was solemnly abjured by the high-priest ; and this claim, from a person who had a divine mission, sufficiently proved by unquestionable miracles, should not have been deemed false and blasphemous. But they were at that time under the dominion of their passions, their envy and malice, and would not listen to reason.\*

21. We see here that Christ is not to return, but to continue in the place that is called *heaven*, or the more immediate presence of God, till the general resurrection, which excludes all idea of a personal reign upon earth before that time.†

22. Moses, [*Deut. xviii. 15.*] encouraging the Jews to look to God, and not as other nations did to witches and wizards, and the arts of necromancy, tells them that God would provide them with prophets *like to himself, of their own brethren*. As he uses the word *prophet*, and as Christ bore a nearer resemblance to Moses than any other of the prophets, (acting as it were with a more direct commission from God,) it has been imagined that this passage had an original reference to Christ,‡ and Peter seems to have thought so. But whether this was the case or not, the passage is very properly quoted on this occasion ; for whether Christ was the Messiah, or simply a prophet, that is, a person bearing a divine commission, the Jews subjected themselves to just punishment by rejecting him.

Since Peter does apply this passage to Christ, it is plain that he considered him, with respect to his *nature*, as of the same rank with other prophets, *one of their brethren*, descended from Abraham, or a man like themselves, and not God, or a super-angelic being.

24. We find no prophecy concerning Christ in *Samuel*.§ But when the Jews spake of their prophets in general, they naturally mention Samuel, as the first of their prophets who was a writer after Moses.||

25. By the *children*, or disciples of the prophets, we are to understand those who had the benefit of their instructions, and who professed to believe and obey them.

26. This preference we find given to the Jews, that Christ was descended from them, and for some time the gospel was

\* " S. Pierre leur parle ainsi, pour les gagner par la douceur." *Le Clerc*.

† See *ibid.* ; *Hallett*, II. p. 169 ; *Doddridge* ; *Pearce* ; *Com. and Ess.* I. pp. 28, 29.

‡ See *Jeffrey's Review*, p. 117 ; *Doddridge*.

§ " 1 *Sam.* ii. 10 ; 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 3—5," according to *Doddridge*, " speak very expressly of the Messiah."

|| " Il commence par Samuel, parce que c' est le premier prophète, après Moïse, dont il nous reste des écrits." *Le Clerc*.

preached to them only. But upon their rejecting it, it was preached to the Gentiles, though, no doubt, it would have been so if this had not happened. It pleased God, however, that this favour should be granted to the Gentiles by way of punishment for the incredulity and obstinacy of the Jews. But, as the apostle says, if we be gainers by the unbelief of the Jews, how much more shall we be so by their conversion? The former event was followed by a partial conversion of the Gentiles; but the latter, we are informed, will be attended with the conversion of the whole world. Then *the fulness of the Gentiles*, as it is called, *will be come in*, and *there will be one sheepfold and one shepherd*.

IV. A miracle of so public a nature as that which is recorded in the preceding chapter, I mean the cure of a man who had been lame from his birth, performed in open day, in the presence of great numbers; a miracle of such a nature as that there could be no suspicion of collusion or artifice with respect to it, could not fail to make a great impression upon the people, and must have exceedingly irritated the Jewish priests and rulers who had so lately put Jesus to death, and who, no doubt, took it for granted that they should hear no more of him. Accordingly we have in this chapter an account of their proceedings in consequence of it, which shews that they were extremely irritated; but like every other opposition to the spread of the gospel, to this day, whether art or power was employed for the purpose, it operated to its furtherance and firmer establishment.

1. *The Sadducees* must have been more particularly offended at the testimony which the apostles gave to the resurrection of Jesus, when they disbelieved a resurrection in general, and many of these persons were rich, and in the highest offices of the state. Thus *Annas* appears from *Josephus* to have been a *Sadducee*, but it is probable that few, if any, of the common people were of this sect; which sufficiently proves that the doctrine of a resurrection was the ancient faith of the Jewish nation, the common people being in all cases the least apt to adopt new opinions, while the rich, who can afford the expense of a liberal education, and will therefore be most disposed to speculate, are the most subject to make innovations.

4. The evidence of a divine power accompanying the preaching of the apostles, must have been very striking indeed to have made such an impression upon *Jews*, who are so remarkably averse to the idea of such a *Messiah* as Jesus was declared to be; an idea to which the apostles



themselves were originally as averse as any others. Indeed, we have no instance of any prejudice so deeply fixed as this of the Jews, relating to the temporal reign of their Messiah, so that nothing but the most unexceptionable evidence could have overcome it. Never, therefore, were men less previously disposed to receive any thing than the Jews of this age were to embrace Christianity; and yet great numbers of them at its first promulgation did embrace it, and risked their fortunes and their lives by their adherence to it.

After the death of Jesus we find the *hundred and twenty* professed disciples assembled together at Jerusalem, but there was no doubt a much greater number in Galilee and other places. After the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of *Pentecost*, the professed disciples were *three thousand*. We now find them to be *five thousand men*, exclusive of women; and perhaps these five thousand are to be added to the former number of three thousand.\*

6. As Luke says that both *Annas* and *Caiaphas* were high-priests in the year of our Lord's ministry, there might have been no real change of the high-priest after the Passover on which he was crucified. Probably Caiaphas, who was son-in-law to Annas, was the proper or nominal high-priest; but Annas might be the person who had the most real power.† Jesus was led to the house of Annas, before he was conducted to that of Caiaphas.

7—10. It was an opinion among the Jews, and prevails in the East to this day, that wonderful things may be performed by the pronouncing of *certain words*, in a certain manner, the powers of some invisible agents necessarily accompanying such words. For this purpose they invoked the names of particular persons who had been supposed to be endued with those powers, as if those invisible powers which had been at their command, would be at the command of those who made use of their names. For this purpose, that of Solomon is made use of in the East to this very day, and his name is inscribed on what they call their *talismans*, by the possession and use of which they suppose that the greatest things may be achieved. Thus some of the later Jews have said that Jesus worked his miracles by means of the name of God inscribed in some particular manner on a tablet, which he found in the Temple. Alluding to these notions, *Peter* here says that it was *by the*

\* Yet see *Doddridge*; *Lardner*, V. pp. 239, 240; VI. p. 519.

† See *Doddridge*.

*name of Jesus of Nazareth*, whom they had crucified, or by those powers which had been communicated to him, and which were now transferred from him to them, that the cure at which they were so much surprised had been performed.

11. This allusion Jesus himself had made, and applied to his own case. We find it made use of [*Matt. xxi. 42*] in those solemn and awful warnings which he delivered in the Temple in the week in which he died.

12. That is, no such cures are wrought by any other power; for so the words ought to have been rendered.\* Thus the woman who touched the garment of Jesus said that she was persuaded that, if she should only touch that, she should be saved; for there the same word which is here rendered *saved*, is translated *made whole*, or *cured*.

13.† There is something surprising in *the boldness* of the apostles so very soon after the consternation into which they had been thrown on the death of their Master, which it must be peculiarly difficult to account for on the supposition that they had no persuasion concerning his resurrection. Had they thought him to be still dead, their despair would certainly have continued, and they would have dispersed. Least of all can it be supposed that they would all of them not only get a courage they had never had before, but likewise agree in the same confident ground of their faith and hope. To account for this, there is no occasion to suppose any proper miraculous influence upon their minds, inspiring them with courage, but only a knowledge of the facts of which they were witnesses, and the extraordinary powers with which they were conscious that they were endued. The ascension of their Master into heaven, would satisfy them that their idea of his *temporal reign* was a mistake; and the full conviction they had of his resurrection, and his favour with God, together with their being employed to succeed him, in carrying on the great ends of his mission, would convince them that there was a much more glorious kingdom of Christ, in which they were to share, to take place hereafter. This, and the recollection of what Jesus had hinted to them to the same purpose, would be sufficient to make them overlook all their temporal prospects, keeping in view those that were eternal.

\* See *Impr. Vers.* "Il n'y a aucun autre homme, que l'on puisse nommer le Sauveur des hommes." *Le Clerc.*

† *Ignorant and unlearned men.* "Illiterate men and in private stations of life." *Doddridge.* See *Lardner*, VI. pp. 157, 158; *Newcome* in *Impr. Vers.*



16. It is remarkable that the Jews, in the time of our Saviour and of the apostles, did not deny the reality of their miracles. They only ascribed them to a different cause. But as they were the best judges of the *facts*, and we are satisfied that their idea of the *cause*, viz. the power of *demons*, or charms, is altogether insufficient to account for the facts, (and as we are satisfied that the powers of nature cannot be controuled except by the Author of nature,) we have at this day all the reason that we can have to acknowledge that Christ and the apostles had a divine mission.

22. He had therefore, been long known, and his case must have been considered as hopeless and incapable of being relieved by any natural remedies, had there been time and opportunity to apply them, which it is evident in this case there was not.

26. The second *Psalms*, which is here quoted, is remarkably applicable to the first promulgation of the gospel, though it related originally to *David* and his posterity only. It is said that the Jews in general considered this psalm as prophetic of the *Messiah*:

32. Though the possessions continued to be *their own*, their love to each other was so great, that they freely imparted to all who had need, as if they had been held in common. If their riches were in things immovable, as in lands, they sold them, in order to have it more in their power to distribute to those who were in want.

33. To bear witness of *the resurrection of Jesus*, was the great object of the apostolic office. And though the Jews in general acknowledged the miracles of Jesus, of which, indeed, themselves were witnesses, other evidence of this particular event was necessary.

By *great grace being upon them*, is to be understood their being in great favour with the common people,\* who had not the motives with their rulers to oppose Christianity, though they had not the courage to make an open profession of it.

36. Though the *Levites*, as a tribe, had no division of the land of Judea allotted to them, but were maintained by tithes; yet individuals of them were not debarred from having property, either in Judea, or other countries.

V. We have seen that from a spirit of unbounded generosity, and without any proper moral obligation to it, the richer of the first converts to Christianity, at least many of

\* So Casaubon. Grotius in Doddridge. See Newcome in Impr. Vers.

them, gave all they had to the common stock appropriated to the relief of their brethren, who in general were poor. A greater proof than this they could not have given of their firm belief of Christianity, or of their disinterested principles in embracing it. Men of sinister views would never have done thus much. Their conduct, therefore, is an argument of their full conviction of the truth of the gospel, and of their looking for no reward in this life, but only *at the resurrection of the just*.

1, 2. We have now, however, an account of two persons taking advantage of this circumstance, by pretending to have given to the public stock all that they had, or at least the whole of some particular possession, or estate, which they had sold, thinking perhaps, that besides acquiring the reputation of generosity, in common with *Barnabas*, and others mentioned before, they should also have a share in the common distribution, as having given their *all*. But it pleased Divine Providence in a peculiarly awful manner to detect this fraud, to shew that the church, in its infant state, was under the immediate direction of God.

3. All *evil*, in a figurative way of speaking, is said to arise from the influence of *Satan*, or the devil, as if this was a real invisible being, of great power and universal presence, the rival, as it were, of God himself. But as this is never supposed to be any excuse for any wickedness of which men are guilty, it is plain that such language could only be used as a figure of speech, and that the evil was never really thought to have any other source than the ungoverned passions of men. Peter in this case is far from considering *Ananias* as less guilty upon account of *Satan having filled his heart*. On the contrary, this is the very thing with which he reproaches him. The aggravation of his guilt was, that he attempted to deceive or impose upon, not the apostles, but the holy spirit, by which they were guided.\* This, therefore, seems to be a case of *blasphemy against the Spirit*, of which our Saviour spake, as of an offence that would not be forgiven.

6.† It was usual with the Jews, as we have seen in the case of *Lazarus*, to bury persons on the same day that they died.

13. That is, none ventured to join themselves to the body of Christians with a sinister view, as *Ananias* and *Sapphira* had done,‡ but they were all sincere believers, and had upright views.

\* See *Lardner*, XI. p. 151; *Pearce*.

† See *Le Cene*, pp. 592, 593.

‡ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.



17. This was *Annas*, or *Ananus*, whose family, according to *Josephus*, were *Sadducees*, the most inveterate enemies of Christianity.

19\*—23. This was a miracle of a peculiarly public nature, and must have made a great impression upon the people, as we find it did. There was no evidence of any force having been used to effect this escape. *The prison doors* were found shut, and locked after them, and the keepers in their proper station, knowing nothing of the matter.

26. The Christians were now popular again, as Jesus generally was with the common people, who were convinced that the presence or power of God was with them for some purpose or other, though they might not distinctly perceive what.†

31.‡ That is, true religion, which contains the doctrine of forgiveness of sin upon true repentance, was to be preached under the name of Christianity, as the same doctrine had before been taught as an article of the Jewish religion.

32. By *the holy spirit* is here meant those *miraculous powers* by which they had been released from their late imprisonment.§

33.|| They might see that it was in vain to put the apostles in prison, from which they had been released in so miraculous a manner, and therefore they did not attempt it again. But as, notwithstanding the same miraculous power, they had actually effected the death of Jesus, they might think that it would also be in their power to put the apostles to death. Though, however, it was the will of God that they should have that power over Jesus, he did not think proper that the apostles should be put to death at that time.

34. This *Gamaliel* was an eminent teacher of the law, and of great authority among the Jews, being mentioned by their own writers in that light;¶ and it was he at whose feet *Paul* had been brought up a rigid *Pharisee*. Gamaliel

\* See on ver. 20, *Heinsius* in *Le Cene*, pp. 593, 594.

† “They might entertain some hope of obtaining temporal deliverance by their means. Compare *Acts* i. 6.” *Doddridge*.

‡ To give repentance. “Publier, au nom de Dieu, que Dieu accepteroit désormais la repentance de toutes sortes de pécheurs, et leur pardonneroit leurs péchés, à condition qu’ils s’en corrigassent à l’avenir. Voyez, *Ch. xi. 18.*” *Le Clerc*.

§ “‘The miraculous gifts,’ say those judicious commentators, *L’Enfant* and *Beausobre*, ‘which Jesus had bestowed upon the apostles, and which they conferred upon believers.’” *Lardner*, XI. p. 150. See *Doddridge*; *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 123.

|| See *Le Cene*, p. 594.

¶ See passages respecting him from the *Misna*, in *Wotton*, I. p. 191. *Doddridge*.

might possibly think that, as the apostles had unquestionably the power of working miracles, God might by their means be preparing the way for a deliverance of the Jews from their subjection to the Romans, and thus, though in a manner unexpected to themselves, hasten the coming of the *Messiah*. In this state of uncertainty; he naturally and prudently advises his brethren to wait the issue of this business. Had the apostles promised that their Master would return again, and deliver Israel, or appear in such a character as the Jews in general wished their Messiah to do, they would have had no objection to him. It was not the person of Jesus (though they could not well reconcile themselves to *Nazareth*, the place of his birth,) but his character and pretensions that they disliked.

36. This *Theudas*, who is not mentioned by any other historian, was probably one of those who had raised disturbances in Judea after the death of Herod the Great. At that time the Jews discovered a peculiarly restless and turbulent spirit, the Roman yoke being then new and galling to them, so that they were ready to listen to any impostor that promised them deliverance. Another person of this name, but after this time, *Josephus*\* speaks of, who promised to divide the river Jordan, as a proof of his divine mission, for the deliverance of his countrymen.

37.† When the Romans reduced Judea to the form of a province of the empire, appointing governors, and levying taxes, (which was after the death of *Archelaus*,) the Jewish nation brooked it very ill, many of them thinking it even unlawful to support a Heathen government. At the head of some of these appeared *Judas of Galilee*, whose history is given at length by *Josephus*,‡ exactly corresponding to this short account in *Luke*. Though this Judas was cut off, many of the Jews, and probably the great body of them, held the same tenets, which at last produced an open revolt from the Romans, terminating in the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews.

VI. In consequence of the large contributions of generous and well-disposed persons to the relief of the poor sort of Christians, (than which a more unequivocal proof could not have been given of their full persuasion concerning the truth of Christianity, and of the certainty of its promised

\* *Antiq. B. xx. Ch. v. Sect. i.*

† On vers. 36, 37, see *Le Clerc; Le Cene*, pp. 594, 595; *Essay*, 1727, p. 303; *Bowyer; Doddridge; Pearce*.

‡ *Antiq. B. xviii. Ch. i. Sect. vi.*



rewards in a future world,) the apostles, who had the care of this large stock, found themselves embarrassed in the distribution of it, pretty much as Moses had been in his conducting the Israelites through the Wilderness, having by this means more business upon their hands than they could properly attend to. And we find that they relieved themselves as Moses did, by appointing a sufficient number of persons to act under them, in matters of a secular or inferior nature, while they applied themselves to the more important duties of their station, as apostles and preachers of the gospel.

1. These *Grecians*\* could not be Gentile Greeks, converted to Christianity, for as yet the gospel was preached to Jews only, but to Jews living among the Greeks, and using the Greek language, which they did in the synagogue worship, by the means of the translation of the Scriptures into Greek. These persons having, like Barnabas, who was of Cyprus, contributed to the common stock, as well as the richer converts in Judea, thought that the poor among them had the same right to a distribution from the common stock with the poor of Judea itself. To this, however, it should seem, that the Jews in Judea had objected, at least to the proportion which had been claimed, though of the ground of this difference we cannot now be judges.

2. By *serving tables* we are to understand attending to secular affairs,† for which purpose they sat and did business at tables. Thus we read of the tables of the money changers of the Temple.

3. That is, that they were to be endowed both naturally and supernaturally, being men of good understanding and discretion, proper for the conduct of business, and also distinguished by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which, in some degree or other, appeared to have been common to all the disciples in that age. These seven persons are sometimes called *deacons*, though not in the Scriptures; and their office resembled that of such deacons as were afterwards appointed in Christian churches in some particulars only. The persons here mentioned were eminent preachers of the gospel, and are sometimes called *evangelists*. This was not the proper business of deacons, who were only inferior officers in the church.

5. This *Nicholas* was the only one of the seven who was

\* "Les Juifs qui parloient Grec." *Le Clerc*. See *Le Cene*, p. 762; *Essay*, 1727, p. 293; *Bowyer*; *Doddridge*; *Lardner*, XI. pp. 292, 296—304.

† Perhaps providing the *commons* for the different tables. See *Le Clerc*.

not a Jew ; but he must have been a person who was circumcised, and who conformed in all respects to the Jewish ritual.\*

6. This *laying on of hands* could only be by way of designation to an office,† for no spiritual gifts are said to have been imparted by it. Before this imposition of the hands of the apostles, these men are said to have been filled with the Holy Spirit, as well as with wisdom, proper for their office. Praying for particular persons was generally accompanied with the imposition of hands, the person who prayed laying his hand upon the head of the person for whom he prayed. As this imposition of hands is said to have followed the prayer, it is possible that this might be done by those who could not conveniently do it during the time of prayer, to express their concurrence in the service.

7. The Syriac version has *other Jews*, not *priests*.‡

In general the priests, and other persons in power and high places, were averse to Christianity ; but the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, and of a divine power accompanying the apostles, who bore witness to it, was so great, that notwithstanding their deep-rooted prejudices, we here see that a considerable number of these priests were converted to Christianity.§ In later times a similar proportion of persons of rank and power, and also men of science and philosophy, became converts to Christianity ; there being men of candid and ingenuous dispositions in all stations of life, and in *all classes* ; though it cannot be expected that there should be so many of them among those who are distinguished for wealth, power, or knowledge, to whom such a religion as that of Christianity must at first sight have appeared very contemptible, and, as they would think, unworthy of them ; whereas, persons in less conspicuous stations in life would not be so liable to make that objection. The same observation was illustrated at the time of the Reformation, persons in middle stations of life being the first to declare themselves against the corruptions of the Church of Rome ; and such are the persons who in all cases have the least difficulty in quitting any established form of religion, and forming themselves into new sects in opposition to it, following only the dictates of their own consciences, without regarding what the world may say or think of

\* "Some ancient writers" supposed him to have been "the founder of the sect of the *Nicolaitans*." See *Doddridge*.

† "Pour les bénir." *Le Clerc*.  
See *Doddridge*.

‡ *Wakefield*. (P.) See *Bowyer*.



them, by which we see persons in the upper ranks of life almost wholly governed. Whatever these may *think*, or inwardly approve, they cannot quit their connexions, but must *live* and *act* as others do. It is therefore far from being any objection to Christianity, that a great majority of the first converts were of the lower classes of life. Such persons have as good natural understandings as their superiors, they have more leisure to inquire concerning truth, and they have fewer prejudices.

9. The Jews who were inhabitants of distant places, had synagogues at Jerusalem for their proper use, when they resorted thither; for they could not have been edified by attending public worship in the synagogues of native Jews, as they did not always understand the Hebrew or Chaldee language. These *libertines*\* were those Jews who had been slaves, especially at Rome, but who by one means or other had obtained their liberty, and being in sufficient numbers, might choose to have a synagogue in Jerusalem to themselves. The Roman historians speak of great numbers, some thousands of them, about this time, under the name of *Libertini*, or freed-men, being sent from *Rome* to *Sardinia*. Many were carried by Pompey into Italy, where they were set at liberty, and their children would be called *Libertini*. Agreeably to this, the Jews that were banished from Rome by *Tiberius* are said by *Tacitus* to have been of the *libertine* race.

11. It was very natural for the Jews, whose veneration for *Moses* was exceeding great, to conceive that Christians, by speaking of Jesus as superior to Moses, undervalued their great prophet and detracted from his authority; and to undervalue, or blaspheme Moses, they would naturally consider as the same thing with blaspheming God.

14. Christ, having foretold that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed, it is very possible that some Christians might imagine that this would be effected by Christ in person, at his second coming, which was generally thought to be very near. And though at this time no Christian thought of abandoning any part of the law of Moses, or the proper customs of the Jews, yet the peculiar institutions of Christianity (though not contrary to any thing in Judaism) would naturally be interpreted by the unbelieving Jews as making a change in those customs which Moses had delivered to them. Moreover, the Pharisees would consider the opposi-

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Bowyer*; *Lardner*, I. pp. 494—496; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

tion that all Christians made to their *traditions*, as an opposition to the ancient religion.

15. Whether there was any thing supernatural in the countenance of *Stephen*, like that of *Moses*, when he descended from the Mount after conversing with God, does not appear. A look expressive of cheerfulness and courage might be all that was intended to be expressed,\* by saying that *his face was as it had been the face of an angel*, as we meet with several expressions similar to this in Jewish writers.

VII. 1. We have had an account of *Stephen*, a zealous preacher of the gospel, being accused before the Jewish Sanhedrim, as a blasphemer of the Temple and of the Law; teaching that Jesus would destroy that celebrated structure, together with the city of Jerusalem, and *change the customs which Moses had delivered*. He is now called upon to speak in his own defence, which he does much at large, but in an indirect manner.† By going over the most essential part of the Jewish history, (thereby shewing his belief of it in common with themselves,) he gives them to understand that the Divine Being, the God of their fathers, and the giver of their law, was not confined to particular places or customs, but might, consistently with the tenor of his dispensations, introduce that of *the gospel* in addition to that of *the law*. He also occasionally forewarns them by the example of their forefathers, of the risk they ran by their obstinacy and incredulity. But this, also, he did in an indirect manner only, till the conclusion of his speech.

2.‡ By this he intimated that the favour of God was not confined to the land of Judea, for that God first appeared to *Abraham* when he lived in Chaldea. *Charran* is in *Mesopotamia*, to the north of Chaldea, where *Abraham* and those who accompanied him resided some time before he proceeded to the land that God promised him.

3. We are not expressly told the reason why God called *Abraham* to leave his country; but it may be collected from circumstances in the history of the Old Testament, that the inhabitants of Chaldea were at that time falling into idolatry, and that the family of *Abraham* himself was infected by it.

\* They "saw an air of majesty in his aspect." N. T. 1729. See *Doddridge*.

† "Chaque circonstance, qu'il rapporte, ne regarde pas directement ce but; il y en a plusieurs, qui ne sont que comme des ornemens du tableau qu'il fait de la dureté des Juifs." *Le Clerc*. See also his *Notes* on other passages of *Stephen's Discourse*. *Doddridge*, in his zeal for a supposed *plenary inspiration*, censures *Le Clerc*, on this occasion, in terms very unbecoming. See his *Sect. xiii., Note (c)*.

‡ See *Bowyer; Pearce*.



*Joshua* says that their fathers worshipped idols beyond the flood, that is, beyond the river *Euphrates*, or while they resided in Chaldea, whereas we see in the history of Abraham that the inhabitants of Canaan and Egypt were not at that time idolaters. It appears that even those of the family of Abraham who remained in Mesopotamia had idolatrous rites at the time of Jacob's going thither; but these they might have learned from their neighbours after the time of Abraham.

The posterity of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob were evidently separated from other nations by a peculiar ritual and form of government, that there might be one nation in the world which should be the repository, as it were, of the true religion, and more especially that they should bear their testimony to the great doctrine of the unity and supremacy of the true God, as the Jews do to this day, when even the Christian world is fallen into an idolatry similar to that of the Heathens, paying divine worship to Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and innumerable other dead men and women, such as the Heathen gods chiefly were.

4. According to Moses, *Terah* must have lived in *Mesopotamia* after the departure of Abraham. He had his three sons, Abraham, Nahor and Haran, when he was seventy years old, and Abraham was seventy-five when he left Mesopotamia, which must have been in the one hundred and fortieth year of Terah, and he lived in all two hundred and five years. But according to the Samaritan copy, which is of equal authority with that of the Jews, Terah lived only one hundred and forty years; and if Abraham was not the eldest of the sons of Terah, he might have been born some time after his father was seventy years old, so that this account of Stephen might be true.\*

6. The Israelites were not in Egypt much more than two hundred years; but the term *four hundred years* commenced at the date of the prophecy, and ended at the deliverance of the nation from their bondage in Egypt.

8. All this was prior to the law of Moses, of which the Jews boasted so much.

9. This shews that the Divine favour was not confined to Judea.

14. The *three score and fifteen* mentioned here includes the family of Joseph, for without that they were only seventy persons in all.†

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 539—542; *Essay*, 1727, p. 251; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Bowyer*; *Pearce*.

16. It is probable that all the twelve patriarchs, as well as Joseph, were buried in the land of Canaan, in the same place, and at the same time, viz. at Sichem, after the Israelites under Joshua had taken possession of the country. A Jewish writer speaks of their sepulchres being there. But the burying-place which had belonged to *Emmor* was bought by *Jacob*, and not by *Abraham*. That which was bought by Abraham was the cave of *Machpelah* in Hebron, and had belonged to the sons of *Heth*. The fact was either imperfectly recollected by Stephen, or rather the historian, or there has been some alteration in the present text in consequence of transcribing.\* It was in the cave of Machpelah that Jacob and Leah were buried, as well as Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, before them.

22. Being a great prophet, and distinguished by many works of a miraculous and stupendous nature.†

24. Moses probably saw that *the Egyptian* would have killed the Hebrew, and therefore he took the part of his countryman, and assisted him in killing the Egyptian.‡

25. It is very possible that Moses might have formed some design of *delivering* his brethren, being in so distinguished a situation at the court of Pharaoh, and being a witness of their oppression, even before he was divinely appointed for that purpose. Or he might have had the intimation in a supernatural manner, but this event might have disconcerted his scheme.

30. Consequently Moses was fourscore years old when he undertook the deliverance of his countrymen.

33. To have the feet bare is a mark of reverence in the East. Thus the priests were without shoes while they attended the service of the Temple,§ but had their heads covered, which is also deemed another token of reverence, which is the reverse of our customs.

35. In this Stephen might intend indirectly to reprove the Jews of his day for their obstinacy in rejecting Christ, who was their true *Messiah*, or *deliverer*.

37.|| This prophecy was by Peter and others applied to Christ, so that to acknowledge *Christ* was not to renounce *Moses*.

41. It does not appear that in worshipping this idol,

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Le Cene*, pp. 649—654; *Essay*, 1727, pp. 251—255; *Doddridge*; *Bowyer*; *Pearce*; *Newcome* in *Impr. Vers.*

† See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

‡ See the defence of this action, in *Le Clerc*.

§ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

|| See, on *Chap. iii. 22*, *supra*, p. 398.



which was no other than the figure of the Egyptian god *Apis*,\* they meant to worship that god, but their own God, Jehovah, under the same resemblance; a thing forbidden in the second commandment, but not a crime of so heinous a nature as the grosser kind of idolatry. The festival which they instituted upon this occasion they called *a feast to Jehovah*.†

43. We see that one degree of vice and depravity is punished by what may be called *a judicial blindness*, in consequence of which men may be led into greater guilt, and of course severer punishment. The Israelites, notwithstanding the evidence which they had of the sole divinity of their own God, and his superiority to all the gods of Egypt, retained the idolatrous customs of that country, and worshipped the host of heaven, or the sun, moon and stars, and had portable temples, or shrines, dedicated to them, even in the Wilderness, where they were under the immediate guidance of the true God.‡ The figure of a *star* shews that the deity which it represented was one of the host of heaven. *Remphan*,§ called *Chiun* in the Old Testament, is said to have been the planet *Saturn*. The worship of dead men, which prevailed chiefly among the Greeks and Romans, was not then known.

All this history, recited by Stephen, shews the proneness of the Jews to infidelity and disobedience in all former times, and therefore was a proper warning to the Jews of his own day. But had he made such an application of it in a direct manner, it is not probable that he would have been permitted to proceed in his speech so far as he did.

We see by this speech of Stephen how well acquainted he, and probably the Jews in general, were with their Scriptures. They could quote and apply them with the greatest readiness upon all occasions. Let us Christians imitate their example, and take pains to make our children as well acquainted with the Scriptures as theirs were. The books of Scripture are now more extensive, and consequently more valuable than they were in the time of Stephen. We ought, therefore, to prize them the more, and make the more use of them; and we shall be much more blameworthy if we do not.

\* According to Sir Isaac Newton's *Chronol.* Ch. ii. "On the Empire of Egypt," *Apis* was not known in Egypt when the Israelites were there. See *Pearce*.

† See, on *Exod.* xxxii. 5, 6, Vol. XI. p. 182.

‡ See *Gregory*, p. 54; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

§ "Corruptly put for *Ῥεμμαν* (*Remmon*), 2 Kings v. 18. *Beza*." See *Bowyer*; *Pearce*.

Stephen, in his defence against the charge of *blaspheming Moses*, and introducing customs contrary to those appointed by him, briefly goes over, as I have observed, the history of the Jews, and of the Mosaic dispensation, and in the course of his speech he takes the opportunity of noticing many instances of obstinacy and disobedience in the Jews of former times, as a warning to those before whom he was speaking.

44. The Temple, to which the Jews in the time of Stephen were so superstitiously attached, had no being several hundred years after the time of Moses. It might, therefore, be inferred that, as God was acceptably worshipped before the creation of that celebrated structure, he might also be so without it.

45. *Jesus*, which is the same word in Greek with *Joshua* in Hebrew, signifies *Saviour*; but that Joshua who succeeded Moses, was intended to be a type of Jesus, does not appear. In some respects, indeed, their characters and their offices bear a resemblance to each other, as, that Joshua put the Jews in possession of the land of Canaan, and Jesus will put all his faithful followers in possession of what is called *the heavenly Canaan*. But no serious stress is to be laid on such resemblances, or types, as these.

48. This part of the speech of Stephen is evidently calculated to lessen the superstitious respect which the Jews of that day had for their *Temple*. According to their law, they were to pray looking towards that building, or the place where it stood, as it were to remind the Divine Being of his promises respecting that country, and the final settlement of the Israelites in it; but the success of their prayers did not at all depend upon that circumstance; and with respect to us Gentiles, there is no fixed place to which we are to have respect in our devotions. In all places God, who is a Spirit, is acceptably worshipped, if it be *in spirit and in truth*. The bowing, or worshipping, towards the East, in the devotions of some Christians, was a pretty early instance of superstition, but should not, for that reason, be continued.

51. Stephen, having till this part of his speech only *indirectly* censured his judges, had been suffered to proceed so far without interruption. But now that he comes to a pointed and severe application of what he had said, comparing the Jews of this day to those of preceding ages, they were not able to bear it.

53. There is no particular mention of *angels* being em-



ployed in giving the law of Moses, except they be intended by those *Saints* with whom, in his blessing of the twelve tribes, he says that *God came*: (*Deut. xxxii. 2*;) “the Lord came from Sinai;—he came with ten thousands of saints. From his right hand went a fiery law for them.”\* Also *David* says, (*Psalms lxxviii. 17*;) “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” From this language, however, which is perhaps only figurative, came the idea which was common to the Jews and the apostles, that the law was given by the instrumentality of *angels*, as an order of beings distinct from *man*. For in the language of Scripture, whatever God makes use of is sometimes called his *angel*, or *messenger*. As when the *Psalmist* says, [*Psalms civ. 4*], “He maketh the winds his angels, and flames of fire his ministers;” for thus the verse ought to be rendered.

Admitting, however, that *the law* was given by *angels*, it is plain that it could not be given by Christ, whom some think to have been the medium of all the Divine communications to man from the beginning of the world. For the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* [ii. 17] expressly distinguishes Christ from those beings that are called *angels*,† and gives reasons why the Saviour of man should be a *man*, and not an *angel*.

55. This *glory of God* which Stephen saw, was probably a luminous appearance, such as had appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Tabernacle and Temple of old, as the symbol of Divine presence. This vision was highly proper to encourage Stephen, as the first martyr for the faith of Christ.

Here *Jesus* is as particularly distinguished from *God* as he is elsewhere from *angels*; and in the Scriptures there is no mention made of any intelligent being besides *God*, *angels* and *men*.

56. This could not fail to exasperate the Jewish Sanhedrim, before whom Stephen was speaking, in a particular manner, as they were the very words which Jesus himself pronounced before them when he was adjured by the high-priest [*Matt. xxvi. 64*] to tell them whether he was the *Messiah* or not; when he replied, *I am*, and “ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, (that is, *of God*,) and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

\* See Doddridge; Pearce.

† See Dr. Morgan's *Tracts*, 1726, pp. xxiii. xxiv.

59. It may be thought extraordinary that the Jews should have no power of life and death, when Jesus was condemned by them, and yet should, without any application to the Roman governor, not only pass sentence of death upon *Stephen*, but actually execute it, and while the same governor, Pilate, was in the country. But Pilate was interested in conniving at many irregular proceedings of the Jews; having been guilty of many irregularities himself, and dreading a prosecution from them. Besides, as this might not be at the time of any of the Jewish festivals, so that the governor would not be at Jerusalem, but at Cæsarea, the Jewish rulers might in his absence take the greater liberty. That *Stephen* was put to death in a tumultuous manner, without the regular sentence of a court, cannot be supposed. For as he is said [*Chap. vi. 12*] to have been *brought before the council by the people, the elders and the Scribes*, and the *High-priest* himself presided at the trial, this must have been the *Sanhedrim*, or the highest court of judicature among the Jews.

It is evident that the proper prayer of *Stephen* was addressed to God. As to his saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, or *last breath*, which was agreeable to the customs of antiquity, when the receiving of the last breath was considered as the proper office of the person's nearest friend or relation, it must be considered that it was addressed to a person whom he actually saw in vision,\* the strong impression of which must have been upon his mind; and a single case of so extraordinary an occasion as this, will by no means authorize us to address our prayers to Christ. It is evident that the early Christians did not consider this example as proper for their imitation. "I bow my knees," says Paul, [*Ephes. iii. 14*], "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," not to Christ himself. Our Saviour's own directions about prayer, [*John xvi. 23*], expressly exclude himself from being the object of it. "In that day," he says, "ye shall ask me nothing;—whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

60. With what meekness did this first Christian martyr die! How much in the spirit of his Master, praying for his enemies!†

There was a peculiar propriety in *Stephen's* committing his *spirit*, or rather his *life*, to the care of Christ, as he is to come again to raise all the dead, and thus to give to all

\* See Taylor's *Grand Apostacy*, p. 91; *Impr. Vers.*

† See Doddridge.



his faithful followers the lives which they had lost in his service, that from that time *where he is, there may they be also*. Stephen is not said to have gone, immediately after his decease, to Christ, whom he saw in vision, but, on the contrary, *he fell asleep*, or went into a dormant, insensible state, in which he, and all the dead, are to continue till the general resurrection. Till that glorious time, *our lives* are said [Col. iii. 3, 4] to be *hid with Christ in God*, that *when Christ, who is our life*, or has as it were the custody of our lives, *shall appear, then*, but not before, *shall we also appear with him in glory*. Let us, my Christian brethren, be continually looking forward to this blessed hope.

VIII. The Jewish rulers, encouraged by their success in the death of Stephen, and exasperated at the severe reproofs which he had given them, proceeded to a more open and general persecution of the Christians, the Roman government seeming to take no part in the business. Pilate, if he was still the governor, was interested not to offend the Jews, and the Romans in general might not be sorry to see the Jews divided among themselves, and wreaking their vengeance upon one another; as by this means they might think it would be easier to keep them all in subjection.

The first persecution was probably some years after the ascension of Jesus. It seemed good to Divine Providence to spare the Christian church in its very infant state. And this first persecution was only from the Jews, it being many years from this time before the Romans took any umbrage at the rising sect, and by that time the Christian religion had taken so deep root as not to be injured by it. On the contrary, it received strength, as it was more generally diffused by means of every persecution, and especially the more violent ones.

1. *Saul*, who was afterwards the apostle *Paul*, was now a young man. Till this time he had probably been pursuing his studies, and might have been so situated as to have had but little opportunity of knowing Jesus, or of being acquainted with his doctrine. However, the force of prejudice, even in well-disposed minds, is, in certain circumstances, very great, so that it little becomes us to judge of the hearts of men by their conduct only. Paul had actually *a zeal for God*, though it was a zeal without knowledge; and our Saviour himself says to his disciples that *in killing them, men would think that they did God service*. In general, however, it cannot be doubted but that persecutors have been influenced by bad motives, their real views having been, not

to the glory of God, but their own temporal advantage, or the gratification of their revenge.

We see here how the disciples of Jesus obeyed the precepts of their Master, in flying from the places where they were persecuted, and how by this means the knowledge of the gospel was farther diffused.

2. Notwithstanding the public execution of *Stephen* as a criminal, his friends had the courage to shew their respect for him by a public funeral, in the usual forms of the country.\*

5. The Samaritans held all the fundamental principles of the Jewish religion,† and many of them were of Hebrew extraction. Several of them also were particularly prepared for the reception of the gospel, by the preaching of Jesus himself, whom they acknowledged to be the *Messiah*.

This *Philip*, as well as *Stephen*, was one of the *seven* who had been chosen to relieve the apostles in business of a secular nature. They are commonly called *deacons*, but they appear also to have been assistants to the apostles in preaching the gospel, and are therefore sometimes called *evangelists*.

7. The cure of madness, which was imagined by the Jews to be occasioned by the agency of evil spirits, and that of the *palsy*, which is also here mentioned, were both of them miracles of a very extraordinary nature, and they are always noticed as such in all the gospel history.

9. This *Simon* is generally called *Simon Magus*,‡ and in the ecclesiastical history there are many traditions concerning him; some of them sufficiently ridiculous and absurd.§ He was probably one of those who made profession of the oriental philosophy, and who were commonly called *Magians*. Though most of these philosophers were idolaters, worshipping the sun, and for that purpose making use of the emblem of *fire*, they were not all such: for *Daniel* was made the chief of this order at *Babylon*, though he was a worshipper of the true God. The *Magians* made profession of *science* in general, but more especially of astronomy and astrology. They also pretended to many secrets, of the nature of charms, by the power of which they were thought to do wonderful things, and many of them, like the Egyptian magicians, imposed upon the credulity of the vulgar by artful tricks. Hence, in time, came the modern use of the term *magic*.

\* See *Le Cene*, p. 593; *Doddridge*.

† See *Doddridge*.

‡ "Of whom, perhaps, *Josephus* speaks, *Antiq.* xx. 7. 2." *Bowyer*. See *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

§ See *Enfield's Hist. Phil.* B. iv. Ch. i. (*init.*) II. pp. 161, 162.



10. \* That is, he was supposed to be possessed of some extraordinary power, not only such as God alone could confer, but such as was peculiar to those beings who are thought to derive their origin by an immediate emanation from the Supreme Being. Such beings as these were thought by the philosophers of that age to be sent occasionally into this lower world, in the form of men. Such an one the Christian *Gnostics* conceived Christ to have been; and such, it is probable, this *Simon Magus*, or his followers, pretended that he was.

13. *Simon* seems to have considered *Philip* as a man possessed of more extraordinary secrets than himself, and he attached himself to him, pretending to be a believer, perhaps with a view to observe him more narrowly, and thereby learn his arts.†

17. It is evident from this, that the imparting of the gift of *the Holy Spirit* (the only consequence of which probably was the being able to speak in unknown tongues) was peculiar to the apostles. It pleased the Divine Being to distinguish this order of men in this particular manner, though we are not to suppose that this, or any other miraculous power, was exerted at the mere pleasure of the apostles, but only when they had a divine impulse for that purpose.

19. It was evidently the power of working miracles alone that impressed the mind of *Simon* so forcibly.‡ He saw his own arts to be nothing in comparison with the powers of which the apostle was possessed; and thinking that this power, like all that he pretended to, might be communicated to another, he wished to make himself master of it; and as he was willing to impart his secrets to other persons for what he should think would be a valuable consideration, he naturally imagined that *Peter* would do so too.§

21. He had from the beginning formed a very wrong idea of the nature and object of Christianity, not considering that the reformation of heart and life, with a view to a happy immortality, was the distinguishing end of it. He considered it as a branch of *science*, which appeared to be superior to

\* "The Plenipotentary of God." N. T. 1729. See *Doddridge; Newcome in Impr. Vers. on ver. 9.* "Celui par lequel Dieu fait paroître les effets les plus surprenants de sa puissance." *Le Clerc.*

† See *L'Enfant and Limborch, in Doddridge.* "Simon crut que J. C. avoit fait ce qui Philippe en racontoit.—Mais il croyoit que c'étoit seulement par une magie plus excellente que la sienne." *Le Clerc.*

‡ See *Le Moine, in Lardner, XI. p. 151.*

§ From this attempt of *Simon* to purchase a spiritual gift, the purchasing of benefices, or church preferments, has obtained the name of *Simony.* (P).

his own, in what most of all drew his attention, viz. those extraordinary things which it enabled Christians to do.

23. Here is an allusion to a similar expression of Moses, who, speaking of a tendency to idolatry, says, *if a root of bitterness*, that is, a noxious weed, spring up.\*

24. Simon was evidently overawed with the solemnity and the forcibleness of this severe rebuke, given by a person whose extraordinary power he so much admired. Whether he afterwards became a true penitent, and gave more attention to the proper nature of Christianity, does not appear from this history. According to the Christian writers, he continued not only an unbeliever, but an inveterate enemy to Christianity.

This Simon is generally considered by the early Christian writers as the founder of the *Gnostic heresy*, which was the earliest corruption of Christianity, and of which I shall take a proper opportunity to give some account. But it is more probable that, without ever being a Christian, he was one of those who distinguished themselves by the introduction of that species of philosophy which has since obtained the name of *Oriental*, but which was in fact the only philosophy of early times, that of the Greeks themselves being derived from it. According to it, all souls were emanations from the Supreme Mind, or parts detached from him, and often continued in an unembodied state before they were sent down into this world. Those converts to Christianity, who had adopted the principles of this philosophy, and were unwilling to abandon them, being offended at the idea of having nothing more than a crucified man for their Master, held that the soul, or the intellectual part of Christ, had held a distinguished rank in a prior state, and that for the reformation of the world he was sent down into it. To this celestial and super-angelic spirit, they gave the name of Christ; supposing that he either assumed the form of a man without the substance, or merely inhabited the man Jesus, without partaking of his sufferings, which they considered as unworthy of a being of his rank.

This opinion had made a considerable progress among Christians, even in the time of the apostle *Paul*, and much more at the time that *John* wrote his Epistles, in which he expresses the greatest aversion to it. This was the beginning of the exaltation of the person of Christ; though the principle, or ground of it, was afterwards changed by

\* See *Deut.* xxix. 18, or rather *Heb.* xii. 15; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.



the Platonizing Christians, who proceeded to the proper *deification* and *worship* of him, as God, equal in power and glory to the Father. Of this first and most enormous corruption of Christianity we cannot be too fully apprized, nor can it be too strenuously opposed. It will be in vain to preach Christianity to Jews or Mahometans, till it be understood that Christians hold the great doctrine of the unrivalled supremacy of *one God, the Father*, and the perfect subjection of Christ, and all other beings, to him.

26. *Philip*, the evangelist, one of the seven who were appointed extraordinary assistants to the apostles, having preached the gospel with success in Samaria, which was the occasion of bringing thither *Peter* and *John*, that by the imposition of their hands the holy spirit might be given to the new disciples, is now sent by God on another mission.

*Gaza* was a town in the southern extremity of the land of Judea, and which, under the name of *Gath*, had formerly belonged to the Philistines.\* It is on the sea-coast towards Egypt, in a tract of land separated from Judea by a sandy desert.

27. It was much the custom of the Eastern courts to have the principal business of them done by eunuchs. *Candace* was for a long time a name common to all the *queens of Ethiopia*, as *Pharaoh* had been to all the kings of *Egypt*, and *Cæsar*, or *Augustus*, to the emperors of Rome.

*Candace's* kingdom was upon the Nile, in *Atbara*. Her capital was taken in the time of *Augustus*. Her successors exist there to this day.†

This *eunuch* must have been a proselyte to *Judaism*, and, as such, have been circumcised. He had probably been at Jerusalem to attend one of the three great Jewish festivals. *Cornelius* was the first proselyte of the uncircumcision, and of him we have had no account as yet.

28. We see the piety and excellent disposition of this eunuch, in so employing himself on his journey. He was probably in that sandy desert in which a carriage of any kind must have proceeded very slowly, and therefore have given more leisure and convenience for reading.

32. All the more ancient Jewish commentators allow this passage of the prophet *Isaiah*‡ to have been a prophecy concerning the *Messiah*. They also inferred from it, that the *Messiah* would have many difficulties to struggle with, before he would arrive at the firm establishment of his power.

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

† *Bruce's Travels*, p. 505. (P.)

‡ *Ch. liii. 7, 8.* See *Dodson*, p. 327; *Le Clerc*.

33. Some interpret this as if, on account of the mean appearance of the *Messiah*, and his not being openly patronized by any person of consequence, he was thought to be a more proper sacrifice to the resentment of the Jews.\* To a person so abject, justice, for reasons of state, was denied.

The phrase, *Who shall declare his generation?* is by some interpreted to mean, Who will take his part, by speaking in his favour, in a court of justice? And Jesus appears to have been alone, and unsupported, during his whole trial and condemnation. But other persons think it more natural to consider it as an exclamation against the wickedness of that generation.†

37. ‡ How short and simple was the faith of Christians in those times!§ Happy would it have been for the church if no more articles of faith had been added to this creed.

38. It does not follow, from this passage, that Philip and the eunuch went *into the water*, so as to be covered by it. In that desert, sandy country, it is not very probable that any such river, or pool of water, could be found. But the words which we render going *into the water*, may be rendered going *to it*. So, also, coming *out of the water* might have been rendered coming, or returning, *from it*.

39. There is a remarkable various reading in this verse, countenanced by some of the most ancient manuscripts and quotations, viz. *The spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch, and the angel of God caught away Philip.*|| As the holy spirit descended upon *Cornelius* and his friends without the imposition of the hands of *Peter*, and no apostle was present here, it is not improbable but that this might have been the case with the eunuch as a certification to him of his being accepted as a disciple of Christ, and to strengthen his faith in his new profession.

We have no instance of any other miracle similar to this in all the gospel history, viz. of a person being removed from one place to another in a miraculous manner; but such an

\* See *Le Cene*, p. 656; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Bowyer*; *Pearce*; *Impr. Vers.*

† "Who shall describe the men of his time?" N.T. 1729. See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Impr. Vers.*

‡ This verse "is probably a marginal note inserted by mistake into the text." See the account of various MSS. in which it is wanting, N.T. 1729, I. p. 450; also *Newcome* and *Griesbach*, in *Impr. Vers.*

§ Yet *Doddridge* ventures to assert of this text, that, "allowing it to be genuine," which he evidently doubts, "it fully proves, that Philip had opened to the eunuch the doctrine of Christ's divinity," meaning, I apprehend, his supposed *Deity*; for the divinity of our Lord's mission could not be questioned among Christians.

|| See *Doddridge*; *Impr. Vers.*



one occurs in the Old Testament with respect to *Elijah*. [*1 Kings* xviii. 12.]

40. He went along the sea-coast till he came to *Cæsarea*, where he probably settled; as, many years after this, *Paul* found his daughters there. [*Chap.* xxi. 9.]

IX. In a former chapter we had an account of *Saul* of *Tarsus*, a young man zealous for the observance of the law, and an active opposer of Christianity. He was probably a person of some rank and fortune. He was evidently in high estimation with the rulers of the Jews, and had the confidence of the high-priests, and other chief magistrates, in conducting the persecution against the Christians. It was at his feet that they who stoned *Stephen* laid their clothes, having probably been appointed to see the sentence of the court put in execution. We now see this very person, the most unlikely that could have been imagined to become a convert to Christianity, not only being converted, but becoming a most zealous and active promoter of it. No single conversion could afford so fair an argument for the truth of the gospel, because nothing but the strongest evidence, natural or supernatural, could have overcome such incredulity. And we shall find *the circumstances of the conversion* to be as remarkably in favour of the reality of it, as the consideration of his previous character and situation.

1. So zealous was *Saul* in this business of persecution, that he needed no incitement. He himself, we see, sought the employment. He went to the high-priest, and desired of him authority to persecute the Christians, not in Judea only, where the violence of the persecution had probably led a great part to secrete themselves, and from which it had driven others, but in the neighbouring countries, where the Jews acknowledged the authority of the *Sanhedrim* in matters relating to religion, no less than those who resided in Jerusalem. In Damascus the Jews appear to have been very numerous, and in great credit, as may be seen in *Josephus*, the historian of those times.

2. He carried them, *bound, unto Jerusalem*, because he could have no authority to punish them in *Damascus*, though, by the connivance of the Roman governor, it might be done in Judea.

3. It is observable that this supernatural appearance was not in the night, when, by the help of a strong imagination, a person may fancy almost any thing, but at *mid-day*, as *Paul* himself observes, [*Ch.* xxvi. 13,] and not when he was

*alone*, but in company, and in company of men like himself, going on the same business, no doubt encouraging one another, and therefore void of all apprehension from the nature and consequences of what they were about.

This light is elsewhere said [*Ch. xxvi. 13*] to *exceed the brightness of the sun*, and indeed it must have been so if it was distinguished at all; because it was at mid-day, when the sun gives the greatest light, but this extraordinary light must have overpowered it.

5. Here we see how much our Lord interests himself for his disciples and followers. To persecute them is to persecute him, a sentiment which we see more fully illustrated in his own account of the proceedings of the great day of judgment.

The word we render *pricks*, should rather be *goads*,\* alluding to a strong pointed rod with which those who in the Eastern countries hold the plough, prick the oxen that draw it; against which if the oxen kick, they only hurt and wound themselves. With an ox's goad of this kind, and which are still used in the East, *Shamgar* fought and killed a great number of persons, as we read in the book of *Judges* [iii. 31].

7. Saul does not appear to have seen any thing but the supernatural light, and all that his attendants heard was the mere *sound of a voice*, but not *the articulate words*, which Saul only distinguished. As it does not appear that Saul communicated this to his companions, they were probably witnesses to the supernatural appearance only, without knowing the nature or the consequences of it, and without being converted to Christianity, as Saul was. They were therefore the most unexceptionable witnesses of the fact, and to them, with great propriety, he afterwards appeals.

9. That is, till the third day.

14. *All that call on thy name*, should be rendered *all who call themselves by thy name*, or who are thy disciples. It was not then the practice of any Christians to call upon, invoke, or pray to Christ, but only to God in the name of Christ, or as Christians.

17. This would be a great confirmation of the reality of the appearance of Jesus to himself, for Saul does not appear to have known any thing of this Ananias, who came to him of his own accord, after Saul, in a vision, had been apprized of his coming.

\* This passage is not "in any Greek MS. of note." See *Le Clerc*; N.T. 1729, l. p. 451; *Doddridge*; *Impr. Vers.*



As the holy spirit was not communicated by the laying on of any hands except those of the apostles, this descent of the spirit upon Saul was of an extraordinary kind, similar to that on the disciples at the first, and on Cornelius and his friends afterwards. It is remarkable that Saul had no communication with any of the apostles, and received no instruction from them, but was afterwards made an apostle by Christ himself, who by appearing to him and conversing with him, gave him the most satisfactory evidence of his resurrection from the dead, to be a witness to which was the chief qualification of an apostle; for, after enumerating several appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, Paul says, *1 Cor. xv. 8, and last of all he appeared to me as to one born out of due time*; and he repeatedly says, that he received his gospel not from *men* but from *Christ himself*.

20. This *preaching* of Paul was probably before he had received any particular instructions from Christ in person, and therefore before he was properly an *apostle*.

21. We have had an account of the wonderful conversion of *Saul of Tarsus*, who, from being a violent persecutor, became a zealous preacher of Christianity; and it was a conversion, as I have observed, so circumstanced, as to afford the strongest evidence of the truth of Christianity; for nothing but the fullest conviction of this could have induced such a person as Saul was, to change his pursuits and his conduct, as he evidently did. This was effected by the miraculous appearance of Jesus himself at mid-day, as he was near Damascus, whither he was going to apprehend the Christians in that city, that he might carry them bound to Jerusalem, the unbelieving Jews in that place concurring with him in those measures.

22. Upon his conversion, his being baptized by Ananias, and receiving the holy spirit, Paul immediately began to preach to the unbelieving Jews in *Damascus*; proving to them that Jesus, whom he had lately persecuted, was the Christ, or the Messiah.

23. It is pretty evident from the whole history of Paul, and especially from the account which he gives of himself in his epistle to the *Galatians* [i. 17, 18], that he did not continue long at Damascus after his conversion, but went into the neighbouring country, which was part of *Arabia*, of which, as well as of Damascus itself, *Aretas* was at that time king; and that he preached the gospel there, that is, to the Jews residing there, three years. As Paul did this without having had any communication with the apostles,

none of whom he had then so much as seen; and as the gospel does not appear to have been preached there before, it is probable that he had then received his instructions to preach as *an apostle*, from Christ himself in person, from whom he clearly intimates that he derived all his knowledge of the gospel.\* After this three years' excursion, he returned again to Damascus, and then it was that he was driven out of the place by the persecution of the Jews, as we shall presently find.

24. In 2 *Cor.* xi. 32, *Paul* says, "in Damascus, the governor, under Aretas, the king, kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me." This was probably done by the interest of the Jews with the governor; for at this time the king cannot be supposed to have favoured them. It was the daughter of this king *Aretas* that *Herod* of Galilee had divorced when he took his brother *Philip's* wife; and on this account there had been a war between the two princes, in which *Herod* had been defeated.

27. *Barnabas* had probably had some opportunity (of which, however, we have no account) of knowing more concerning *Paul* than other Christians did. Some say that they had been brought up together under *Gamaliel*. Cyprus, the country of *Barnabas*, was opposite to Tarsus, of which *Paul* was a native, and their acquaintance might have commenced in early life.

29. These *Grecians* must have been Jews using the Greek tongue,† or else proselytes; for at that time the gospel had not been preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles.

31. This *rest* from persecution was probably owing to the great apprehension the Jews were under from the resentment of the emperor *Caligula*, who had insisted upon being worshipped as a god through all the Roman empire; an order which no nation but the Jews made any difficulty of complying with: for, as many of them worshipped *dead men*, and living *animals*, and all of them some *natural object* or other, to which they supposed extraordinary powers were annexed, the idea of worshipping *a living man*, especially an emperor, a being of so great power, and to whose exaltation they might think their immortal gods had contributed, would not appear difficult. But the Jews, who were rigorously and justly attached to the worship of *the one living and true God*, the maker of heaven and earth, and who

\* See *Lardner*, VI. p. 258.

† See on *Chap.* vi. 1, *supra*, p. 406.



thought it their indispensable duty to abide by the profession of their religion at all events, could not be brought to comply with this impious order. Provoked by their opposition, he sent an express order to have his statue set up in the holy place in the Temple at Jerusalem. The consternation into which the whole country was thrown on this occasion, which was so great as to make them wholly neglect their agriculture and secular business, moved the Roman governor to compassion. He therefore deferred the execution of his order, and presently after, this self-created deity, but in fact one of the greatest brutes and tyrants that ever lived, was put to death.

This *rest of the Christian Church* was therefore probably about ten years after the death of Christ.\*

34. These circumstances of the rising and taking, or taking away, his bed,† are similar to those which attended on our Saviour's miracles.

36. *Dorcas*, in Greek, signifies the same with *Tabitha* in *Hebrew*, viz. quick-sighted.

40. *Peter*, no doubt, on both these occasions, conceived himself to be moved by some extraordinary impulse to perform these miracles; and this was *the prayer of faith*, to which he was thus prompted, and to which our Lord promised a certain and favourable answer from God. It is evident that none of the apostles had the power of working miracles at their pleasure, and we may infer, as I have shewn from the history of the resurrection of Lazarus, that our Saviour himself always applied to God his Father, from whom he derived his being, and all his powers, for his assistance in all his miraculous works; and concerning all such works, he expressly says, that they were *not his own*, but that they were done by *his Father who was in him*, and acted by him.

X. We are now come to a new and capital era in the gospel history, viz. that of the preaching of it to the *uncircumcised Gentiles*, about ten years after the death of Christ, in which time it had been preached to the Jews only, or to proselytes from Heathenism. There were many clear intimations in the ancient prophecies, that the reign of the Messiah, and the blessings of his kingdom, whatever they were, should be extended to *all nations*, and our Lord himself had not only in his parables, but in a more direct manner, asserted the same thing, and in his last commission

\* See "this rest of the churches" largely explained by *Lardner*, I. pp. 97—100; XI. p. 152.

† See a more probable sense, *Harmer*, II. p. 66, *Note*; *Impr. Vers.*

to the apostles he most expressly commanded them to *preach the gospel to every creature*. But, prejudiced as they were in favour of the privileges of the Jewish nation, as *the peculiar people of God*, they might naturally enough understand every thing of this kind as intended for the Jews who were dispersed in all nations; or, as what was to follow upon the proselyting of all nations to the Jewish religion, in consequence of which they were to become circumcised, and conform to all the burdensome rites of the law of Moses.

Considering this deep-rooted prejudice of the whole Jewish nation, Christians as well as others, there was great wisdom in the appointment that the gospel should be preached a sufficient time to the Jews only; that their prejudices might not be too much shocked, and that they might have one pretence the less for rejecting it. But now that the harvest, as we may say, of the Jews was in a great measure over, and the whole nation had had a sufficient trial, it pleased God that his original intention with respect to all his creatures of mankind should be accomplished, and the gospel be preached to them all.

But fresh miracles were requisite to prepare the minds of the apostles themselves for a thing so unexpected by them.

1. The Roman armies were divided into *cohorts*, or *bands*, consisting of about a thousand men each, commanded by a *tribune*, and these again into companies of a hundred men, commanded by a *centurion*. This band, or cohort, was probably that which was stationed at *Cæsarea*, for the guard of the governor's person, who resided there. This *Cæsarea* was a town rebuilt, and so called by Herod the Great, in honour of *Cæsar*, or the Roman emperor.

2. Several Gentiles, especially those residing in Judea, having better opportunity of distinguishing the religion of the Jews from that of other nations, had their minds greatly impressed in favour of it; and though they did not choose to be circumcised, and thereby become proselytes to the Jewish religion, yet became worshippers of the God of Israel, the only living and true God, and by means of this first great principle of true religion, and meditating upon the books of Scripture, they became excellent characters. It was an easy and happy transition that one of this character should be fixed upon to be the first to whom the gospel should be preached. It would less shock the minds of the Jewish Christians. The character of this *Cornelius*



was similar to that of the centurion whose servant Jesus healed at a distance from his house, who is said to have loved the Jewish nation, and to have built them a synagogue.

We see here that Cornelius was not only a worshipper of the true God himself, but also brought up his family in that worship, as it becomes every pious and virtuous person to do.

By his *prayers to God always*, we may understand at all the hours and seasons at which it was customary with the pious Jews to pray, viz. both at the time of morning and evening sacrifice, and also at noon.

3.\* That is, about our three o'clock in the afternoon.

4.† This was not a speech addressed to the angel, but a prayer to God,‡ whose messenger he concluded the angel to be; for such appearances he must have known had not been uncommon.

It pleased God not to enlighten the mind of this *Cornelius* by his own immediate agency, or by this angel, or by the appearance of Christ to him, but by means of common instructors. And in no case are we to look for extraordinary information, when the common and ordinary means are sufficient.

7. We see that not only the immediate household of this *Cornelius*, but other persons also who attended upon him, were worshippers of the true God. In such he would naturally repose the most confidence; and such he would employ in matters of trust.

8. *Joppa* was distant from *Cæsarea* about thirty miles, and we find these messengers arrived there the second day at noon, having probably set out the evening before.

9. The houses of the Jews, I have frequently observed, had flat roofs, and this part of the house was often as useful as any other. It was frequently used for the purpose of devotion, as a person would be least exposed to observation there, and thence he could better direct his views to the Temple at Jerusalem, to which all pious Jews looked when they prayed.§

10. That is, he became insensible to all present objects, as if he had been in a deep sleep, and was wholly intent on what was passing in his own mind.||

12. That is, both clean and unclean.

\* "A good man: and he, fearing God, saw in a vision." *Beza*, in *Bowyer*.

† See *Mede*, pp. 164, 165.

‡ Yet see *Impr. Vers.*

§ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

|| See *ibid.*

14. As *Peter* uses the word *Lord* in his address to the person who spake to him, it is probable that he knew it to be Jesus, who appeared to him, as he did more than once to Paul; and it is remarkable that, upon several occasions, we find our Lord himself acting in person in what respected the progress of his gospel. In what manner he is employed now that miraculous powers have ceased, we are not informed; and it is, no doubt, very proper that we should remain ignorant of it.

15. *Hath cleansed*, that is, has declared to be clean, and therefore now proper to be killed and eaten. It was by the distinction of meats into clean and unclean, and confining the Jews to the use of the former, that they were more especially separated from the rest of the world; and therefore a vision of this kind, in which the distinction of meats was represented as abolished, was peculiarly well calculated to prepare the mind of Peter to receive the farther intimation that the distinction between the Jews and Gentiles was abolished, that is, so far that the gospel was to be preached to both without distinction, and that, in believing and obeying it, both would be equally accepted of God, and entitled to the happiness of heaven. But that the Jews, though converted to Christianity, are to remain a distinct people to the end of the world, is most fully intimated in the Scriptures; and it is highly probable that they will always remain *a peculiar people*, distinguished by a peculiar mode of worship.\* At least many things in the prophecy of *Ezekiel* evidently relate to times posterior to their final restoration to their own country.

21. [*Then Peter went down to the men.*] That is, he made no distinction with respect to the persons who were sent; for a rigid Jew would not have gone with any Gentiles, so as to converse familiarly with them, and be entertained by them.

23. This being a matter of consequence, it was very prudent in *Peter* to provide proper witnesses of the whole transaction, for his justification to his Jewish brethren, of which we shall find he stood in need.

We are now, as I observed before, considering a new era of the preaching of the gospel, viz. to the uncircumcised Gentiles introduced by the ministry of the apostle Peter, as was that of the first preaching of it to the Jews, after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And thus

\* See Vol. XII. pp. 442—482.



perhaps was fulfilled whatever there was of pre-eminence given to Peter, when our Lord said to him that he would *give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and upon him, as a rock, he would build his church*, though, in a sufficiently proper sense, this was true of all the apostles ; and similar expressions are used with respect to them all.

We have seen that, on account of this event being unexpected even by the apostles, peculiar miracles were employed to prepare the way for it, viz. a supernatural vision to Cornelius, to whom the gospel was first preached, and another to Peter ; and though, in consequence of this, he could not forbear to go on this errand, yet he had the precaution to take with him several of the Jewish converts, to be witnesses of all that should pass, and to justify him to his brethren afterwards.

24. Probably devout persons like himself, that they might have the benefit of Peter's communications, whatever they might be.

25. That is, he shewed him marks of the greatest reverence and respect that were usually paid by one man to another in that country.

26. Peter could not but know that Cornelius considered him as no other than *a man*, though highly distinguished by God ; but he admonished him that no man is entitled to such extreme reverence from another man.\* It would have been happy for mankind if they had considered themselves as more nearly equal to one another, and if pride and arrogance on the one hand, and servility on the other, had not been carried to so great extremes. There has been much impiety in the titles given to kings and great men.

28. This being known to be an established custom with the Jews, it was proper for Peter to give some reason for his ready departure from it ; and this was no less than a positive order from God, who had originally made the distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles.†

29. Peter had been informed by the messengers of the reason of his being sent for ; but for the sake of so great a company, it was proper that Cornelius should declare this himself before them all.

30. That is, in the fourth day from this time. The messengers set out the evening before ; they arrived at Joppa the second day ; the third was perhaps wholly employed in the

\* "There was something extraordinary in this prostration of Cornelius, but without any thing of idolatry." Harmer, II. p. 35.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Lardner*, V. p. 527.

journey; on the fourth day, at the ninth hour, or our three o'clock in the afternoon, was this interview. The distance between Joppa and Cæsarea was between forty and fifty miles, and therefore too much for one day's journey in that hot climate.

34, 35. That is, he does not confine his favours to the Jews, or those who conform in all things to the law of Moses, but respects persons *in every nation*, on account of those good works, for the sake of which he originally distinguished Abraham himself.

36. That gospel of *peace* which was preached *by Jesus Christ* is not confined to the Jews; the kingdom of Christ, and the blessings of it, extending to all mankind.\*

37.† As the gospel had now been preached ten years, and in the very city of Cæsarea, where Cornelius resided, by Philip, the nature of it could not be unknown to any person then present; the miracles of Christ and of the apostles having been of the most public nature. But the Gentiles had considered it as a thing that did not concern them.

38. We see here how all the extraordinary power of Christ is ascribed to God, who was with him, and acted by him.

41. The proper office of an apostle was to bear witness of the resurrection of Christ, of which, as they had known him the most intimately before his death, they were the most competent judges. We see here, as upon other occasions, what stress was laid upon Christ's *eating* with the apostles after his resurrection, as a proof it was no *apparition*, but a real *human body*, having all the natural functions of other human bodies.

I have endeavoured to shew that, had Christ appeared publicly to all the people of the Jews, and they had been converted by it, the gospel history would not have been so credible at this distance of time as it now is. The opposition made to the gospel by the Jews and the Romans of that age, was necessary to its appearing not to be the work of man, or any thing to which human contrivance or power had contributed; and nothing but the most indisputable evidence could have made its way through such opposition.

42. We see here the great object of the gospel, which is the discovery of a life or state of retribution to come, or the announcing to us this great event, that Christ is to come again, to raise the dead and judge the world, when he

\* See *Impr. Vers.*

† See *Le Cene*, p. 726; *Essay*, 1727, p. 196.



will give to every man according to his works. Now in this, all who call themselves Christians agree, notwithstanding their violent opposition to one another, on account of lesser things. To this great object, therefore, which is common to all Christians, let us give the greatest attention, and consider all other articles as of less consequence, and only subservient to this.

43. Whenever *the remission of sins* is mentioned as the consequence of believing in Christ, it is to be understood of such a faith in Christ, or belief of Christianity, as is followed by its proper effects, viz. repentance and good works.

44. This *descent of the holy spirit* upon the first-fruits of the uncircumcision, was similar to that on the Jewish converts on the day of *Pentecost*;\* being an immediate operation of God, and not in the usual way of conferring the gifts of the spirit, viz. by laying on of the hands of the apostles. This was the most satisfactory proof of the whole work being of God; and with this view the history is recited by Peter, in his justification of himself to his brethren at Jerusalem.

45. This descent of the spirit on the Gentiles, notwithstanding all the preceding extraordinary circumstances, we see greatly *astonished* the Jewish converts who accompanied Peter. They probably expected that circumcision, and every thing attending a proselytism to the Jewish religion, should have preceded this divine token of the title of these Gentiles to the benefits of Christianity. And notwithstanding this miraculous appearance, we find that the Jewish converts were with great difficulty reconciled to this dispensation of the gospel.

47.† It is evident from this part of the history, that *baptism by the spirit* is not all that is meant by *baptism* in the New Testament; for here, though the descent of the spirit, or spiritual baptism, had preceded, yet the apostle Peter only alleges this as a reason for baptizing with water afterwards.

48. We have here another instance of baptizing in the name of Jesus only; and not in the form of words which some supposed to be prescribed by our Lord, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*; which particular words, as I have observed before, had better be avoided in the administration of this rite, and other words, if any be thought necessary, expressive of the same meaning, be employed, if, for no other reason, not to encourage superstition;

\* See Chap. xi. 15.

† See Impr. Vers.

since many, no doubt, imagine, that some peculiar virtue or charm accompanies these words when pronounced by a person duly qualified. On this account they have been annexed to all the Popish *sacraments*, and to exorcisms of all kinds.

XI. We are now come to the opening of a great controversy, with which the minds of Christians were much agitated in the whole of the apostolic age, viz. about the admission of the uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian church, and to which a very great part of the Epistles of Paul refer. Every precaution seems to have been taken by Divine wisdom to make this measure, to which the natural prejudices of the Jews made them so extremely averse, as easy to them as possible, and especially to make the part, which the apostle Peter had to act in it, the most unexceptionable. He had been directed by a supernatural vision to do every thing that he did in this affair, and upon his preaching to *Cornelius*, (who, on account of his excellent character, was as proper a person as could have been chosen for the first-fruits of the Gentile church,) the holy spirit had descended upon him and his believing friends, without any interference of Peter in the business; so that, as he observed, it was impossible to refuse to baptize with water, as a token of their being Christian converts, those whom God had previously honoured with that seal of his approbation which had usually followed baptism. Let us however see in what manner the news of this transaction was received at Jerusalem.

2. Though the usual place of Peter's abode was Joppa, yet on this great event he had probably gone of his own accord to *Jerusalem*, to give the most satisfactory account of the whole business.

It is plain from the whole history that neither Peter in particular, nor the apostles in general, were considered as infallible by the body of Christians in those days; otherwise they would not have thought of arraigning his conduct, as we find they did.

3. They do not immediately accuse Peter of baptizing *Cornelius* and his friends, but only of familiarly conversing and *eating* with them, contrary to the received customs of strict Jews. But it does not by any means appear that, though in company with Gentiles, Peter ate of any thing that was forbidden to a Jew, so as to transgress the law of Moses. Had he done any thing of this kind, it could not



fail to have been noticed, and to have excited the greatest alarm.

6. None of these *beasts* were such as a Jew would deem clean or proper for food; for otherwise he might have selected that and omitted the rest.

12. [*Nothing doubting.*] That is, making no distinction of persons, circumcised or uncircumcised.

15. That is, without any desire or interference of mine.

18. He preached that gospel which promises the forgiveness of sins upon *repentance*, the Jews believing that all the blessings of a future life, if not the privilege of a resurrection, were reserved for the Jews only.

19. This was the country north of Judea. *Antioch* was the metropolis of Syria, and next to Rome and Alexandria was the most considerable city at that time in the Roman empire, and like other great cities, it abounded with Jews.

20. [*Grecians.*] That is, uncircumcised Greeks, or Gentiles.\*

22. *Barnabas* being a native of Cyprus, which was not far from *Antioch*, and being probably a person of considerable property, was known to many persons there, and respected by them, and therefore was the more proper to be sent thither.

25. After Paul had preached the gospel in Arabia and Damascus, and had been a short time at Jerusalem, he informs us (*Gal. i. 21*) that he "came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;" and he had probably resided chiefly at *Tarsus*, the place of his nativity, preaching the gospel there.

26. *Barnabas*, knowing the zeal and ability of *Paul*, wished to have such an associate.

We are not told whether the term *Christian* was given to the disciples of Christ by other persons, or assumed by themselves, but the former is the more probable of the two, both from the nature of the thing, and the form of the expression that is here used. Before this time the Christian converts had generally been called *Nazarenes*, and by this appellation the Jewish converts were always distinguished. But this was a term that could not with so much propriety be applied to Gentiles; and on this account, perhaps, their Heathen neighbours adopted the more comprehensive term of *Christian*, and it might easily occur to them, as proper to distinguish the disciples of Christ, as the disciples of Hea-

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Lardner*, VI. p. 264; *Doddridge*.

then philosophers, such as *Plato* and *Aristotle*, had always been distinguished in a similar manner, that is, from the name of the founder of the sect, the former having been called *Platonists*, and the latter *Aristotelians*.

It would perhaps have been happy if all Christians had contented themselves with this simple appellation, expressive of their discipleship to Christ; but as they subdivided in their opinions, other names became necessary to distinguish them from one another; nor is there much inconvenience in this, provided we remember that all other denominations, such as those of *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, *Soci-nians*, &c., are only subdivisions of Christians, and that we do not deny to each their right to that general and comprehensive appellation.

28—30. There were several *dearths* or famines in the reign of *Claudius*. This was probably the second year of his reign, or the fortieth of the Christian æra, when *Josephus* informs us that the queen of *Adiabene* and her son *Izates*, converts to the Jewish religion, sent large supplies of corn to Jerusalem from Egypt and Cyprus, which shews that this famine was not universal. So by this means the Christian church at Antioch and its neighbourhood had a fine opportunity of relieving the wants of their brethren at Jerusalem, and this *labour of love* would tend greatly to reconcile the minds of the Jewish converts to their new brethren of the uncircumcision.\* It appears also to have been customary with the richer Jews in the provinces to send contributions to the poorer Jews in Judea.

XII. We are now come to the end of that period of rest from the persecution of the Jews during the reign of the emperor *Caligula*, a monster of cruelty and extravagance, who had taken into his head to be worshipped as a God in his lifetime, and who had prepared a golden statue of himself which he was resolved to have placed in the Temple of Jerusalem. After his death, A. D. 41, the Jews, being no longer apprehensive on their own account, resumed their persecution of the Christians.

1. This *Herod* is usually called *Herod Agrippa*. He was the grandson of *Herod the Great* by *Aristobulus*, and being educated at Rome, he had acquired an extravagant turn, in consequence of which he was so reduced, that he was in a great measure dependent on his uncle Herod of Galilee, and Herodias his wife, who was his own sister, though it was thought they did not assist him so liberally as they ought to

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Lardner*, I. pp. 240—246; *Doddridge*.



have done. On the death of his uncle Philip, the emperor Caligula, to whom he had been much attached, gave him his dominions, with the title of *king*, so that he now ranked above his uncle, on whom he had been dependent. This circumstance exciting the envy of his sister Herodias, she persuaded her husband to go to Rome to solicit the same title, and also an augmentation of his territories. But Agrippa sent at the same time to accuse him of designs against the empire, and being believed, both Herod and his wife were banished into Gaul, where they ended their days; and this Agrippa obtained the grant of all his dominions. Such was the end of that *Herod* who put *John the Baptist* to death. Still, however, Agrippa had nothing to do with *Judea*, properly so called. But on the accession of Claudius, which, being then at Rome, he had greatly promoted, he was invested with the kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, so that he had now the same extent of territory with his grandfather, Herod the Great, and in the second year of Claudius, A. D. 43, he arrived in his dominions, and being willing to oblige his new subjects, he proceeded against the apostles in the manner that we shall now find.

2. This is that *James* who, together with his brother *John*, the sons of Zebedee, and Peter, had been particularly distinguished by Jesus. These two brothers had presumed so much on the favour of their Master, that by means of their mother they had petitioned for the chief places in his kingdom. In reply he had asked them whether they were able to drink the cup which he should drink of, that is, go through the same difficult scenes that lay before him; and when they replied that they could, he said that they should indeed drink of his cup, but that the advancement for which they petitioned was not at his disposal, but at that of his heavenly Father.\* We now find one of them drinking of his cup, by dying a violent death, the first of all the apostles, fourteen years after the death of Jesus.

4. He had sixteen guards appointed him,† two of whom were always chained to him, one to each hand, while two others kept the door. Each of the sets of four did this duty in their turns. Being so many, there was no probability of bribing them.

10. This *iron gate*, was probably a gate plated with iron, as is still very common in prisons.‡

\* See *supra*, pp. 268, 269.

† “Apparemment parce qu’il [Herode] avoit appris que S. Pierre étoit sorti une autre fois, de prison, sans qu’on eût su comment.” *Le Clerc*.

‡ See *Harmer*, I. p. 207.

11. This deliverance was more remarkable in its circumstances than that of the same apostle and John, presently after the effusion of the spirit on the day of Pentecost. Like that, this must have made a great impression on those who were acquainted with it. But by this time the minds of the Jews in general were become callous to the most satisfactory evidence.

12. This *Mark* was probably the evangelist, the particular companion of Peter, and who is said to have written his gospel by his instructions.

13. They were unwilling to admit strangers, and were obliged to assemble with great privacy for fear of their enemies.

15. Perhaps they might think it to be a messenger from him, for so it might be rendered,\* supposing that she could not distinguish whether the name was pronounced by himself or another; or they might think an *angel* was sent to them on his account, and therefore might be called his angel. That each person had a particular guardian angel, is not known to have been the opinion of the Jews.

17. [*Beckoning unto them, &c.*] This was perhaps lest their noisy exultation should alarm their enemies, and bring them into fresh danger. Though he had been twice delivered by miracles, he was not to tempt Providence by rashly exposing himself.

18. Perhaps *the soldiers*, who had the custody, might have been asleep, and not have perceived that he was gone, till the morning.

19. He took it for granted that it must have been by their connivance.

20. Galilee was remarkably fruitful in corn, and *Tyre and Sidon*, being maritime cities, depended upon it for a supply of provisions.

21. This was in honour, as *Josephus* says, of Cæsar's birth-day.

22. *Josephus* gives the same account of this speech, adding that Herod was clothed in a garment on which was much gold, and that the sun shining upon him, he made a very resplendent appearance.

\* Sir T. Brown says, "The Church of Rome confidently proves the opinion of tutelary angels, from that answer when *Peter* knocked at the door, 'tis not he but his angel; that is, might some say, his messenger, or somebody from him; for so the original signifies, and is as likely to be the doubtful family's meaning. This exposition I once suggested to a young divine, that answered upon this point, to which I remember the *Franciscan* opponent replied no more, but that it was a new and no authentic interpretation." *Rel. Med. Sect. 22, ad fin.* See *Doddridge*.



23. *Josephus* says, that he was seized with a disorder of his bowels, in which probably the worms first bred. It is remarkable that his grandfather died of the same tormenting and loathsome disease,\* as also some other persons who had distinguished themselves the most by their persecution of the Christians. It is not, however, in this life that we are to expect proper retribution, and therefore we should be exceedingly cautious how we infer any thing concerning the characters of men, and the judgments of God concerning them, from any thing that befalls them in this world; though every thing in it be ordered by the wise providence of God, and therefore we are to consider the hand of God in all events.

24. Perhaps the deliverance of *Peter*, and the death of *Herod*, had been a means of putting a stop to this persecution, which does not seem to have been of great extent or continuance. *Herod* died probably in the second year of his reign, and the first after his arrival in his dominions. He left a son of the name of *Agrippa*, then seventeen years old, before whom *Paul* pleaded, and who was by him *almost persuaded to be a Christian*; but for the present his dominions were reduced to a Roman province. He also left two daughters, both mentioned in this book of *Acts*; one *Bernice*, married to *Herod*, king of *Chalcis*, his own brother, and *Drusilla*, afterwards married to the Roman governor *Felix*.

25. They had been to carry alms from the Christians in the neighbourhood of *Antioch*, in consequence of the famine which had been foretold by *Agabus*. [*Chap. xi. 28.*]

XIII. From this time the author of this book, *the Acts of the Apostles*, confines himself to the labours of the apostle *Paul*, whose companion he frequently was; and we shall now have an account of his first remarkable journey for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, which was probably A. D. 44 or 45. We cannot doubt but before this time he must have been fully instructed by Jesus himself for this important work, and as he informs us, *2 Cor. xii. 1*, he had a remarkable vision as he was praying in the Temple, fourteen years before that epistle was written, viz. about A. D. 58, which coincides pretty nearly with the time of his being sent from Jerusalem to Antioch, or this year, A. D. 44. It is possible that some part of those superna-

\* See *Jos. Antiq. B. xvii, Ch. vi. Sect. v.*; *Mead's Med. Sacr. (Ch. xv.) pp. 113—120*; *Lardner, l. p. 25.*

tural communications were made to him at that time; but to have been fully instructed in the gospel, in order to his receiving his commission as *an apostle*, more time, and a more convenient place, were evidently requisite, and these instructions were probably given him soon after his conversion. Before this time he had received the right hand of fellowship from the apostles at Jerusalem, as he informs us, *Gal.* ii. 9, and at that time it was agreed among them, according to his instructions from Christ, that he and *Barnabas* should go to the *Gentiles*, while they would in a great measure confine themselves to the Jews, or proselytes; and we shall see in the course of this history how able and intrepid a preacher he was.

Whether *Barnabas* was properly *an apostle*, or not, has been doubted. He is once called so, and his being joined in this commission with Paul, and his being attended as he was by an inferior minister, gives some countenance to the supposition. But the term *apostle* is sometimes used in a more restrained sense, as a person bearing any particular commission, such as *Barnabas* had done from the Christian church and the apostles at Jerusalem.

On this expedition *Paul* and *Barnabas* were attended by *John*, who was sister's son to *Barnabas*, the same probably with the evangelist *Mark*, who was afterwards more particularly attached to *Peter*, and who is thought to have received his instructions from him in writing his gospel.

1. We see among these prophets, a teacher of Christianity, one who had been brought up with *Herod of Galilee*, so that though not many persons of distinction embraced Christianity in those early times, *some* did, which shews that the greatest temptations in this world, powerful as their influence is on the minds of men, will nevertheless give way to the force of conviction in candid and upright minds. In general, the converts to Christianity in the early ages consisted of persons who were neither of the highest nor the lowest ranks of life, but as *Origen* informs us, of those of the middle ranks, where we generally find both the best dispositions, and the most leisure for inquiry. We frequently, indeed, find mention of *slaves* who were Christians; but many slaves in those times were persons of education, and were entrusted with the management of their masters' affairs; and very deservedly possessed their confidence. In those times it was the lot of many worthy and able persons to be reduced to slavery, and it was not always a disagreea-



ble situation. In many respects also, they acted, as well as thought, for themselves.

2. In what manner this information from God was given, does not appear. It was probably by some of those who are here called *prophets*;\* but from the form of the expression it does not appear to have been given to *Paul* or *Barnabas* themselves, though, as we have seen, they had a general previous knowledge of their destination.

3. By the *laying on of the hands* it is evident that no particular powers were communicated to these apostles: they were fully qualified for their work before. It was only the customary form in which persons were recommended to the blessing of God by prayer.† Thus we find Jacob put his hands upon the heads of the two sons of Joseph, when he prayed for them on his death-bed.

4. *Seleucia* was a city situated on the same river with Antioch, at the distance of twelve miles from it, and nearer to the sea. The island of *Cyprus* is directly opposite to that part of the coast; and being the native country of Barnabas, it was perhaps on this account first visited by them in this progress: besides, this island abounded with Jews.

5. *Salamis* is a city in Cyprus, directly opposite to the place from which they had sailed.

Though their commission was to preach the gospel indiscriminately to all persons, they prudently began in the Jewish synagogues, and probably never preached any where else in public, till they were refused admittance into those places.

6. This *Barjesus*, or *Elymas*, as he is afterwards called, was probably a person of the same profession and character with *Simon Magus*. For the word that is here rendered *Sorcerer*, means only one of the *Magians*, or persons who applied to the study of wisdom, or philosophy, such as those *wise men* who are said to have visited Christ in his infancy. Many of these, being Jews, were strongly infected with the general prejudices of their nation against the Christian name.

7. This *Elymas* being a man of science in those days, it is no wonder that we find him with the proconsul, or the chief Roman governor in the island, and that he should endeavour to prepossess him against Christianity. The governor being, however, a candid and upright man, desirous

\* "Whilst engaged with others in the public worship." *Lardner*, XI. p. 152.

† See *Hallett*, II. pp. 322, 323.

of all kinds of knowledge, he was willing to hear *Paul* and *Barnabas* himself; having probably heard of their preaching in the country: for *Paphos*, where the governor resided, is in a part of the island directly opposite to *Salamis*, where they had landed; and they had probably proceeded leisurely through the whole extent of the island in their way to *Paphos*, and made many converts.

10. Paul, no doubt, found himself supernaturally directed to speak in this manner, as Peter was, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. His example, therefore, will by no means authorize any person to adopt similar language at this day, so as to denounce the judgments of God upon those whom they apprehend to oppose the truth. Let them first give the same evidence of their speaking by divine impulse, that is, the evidence of miracles.

12. So remarkable a miracle, wrought in his own presence, by which a violent opposer of the gospel was so effectually checked and confounded, could not but make a great impression on the mind of a person even worse disposed than that of this Roman governor. What effect this conversion of the governor had on the inhabitants of the island, we are not told, but, no doubt, it must have been great.

We observe, that upon this occasion the Roman governor applied to Paul and Barnabas, and not they to him. They avoided all appearance of seeking the countenance and support of civil power, knowing that their religion stood in no need of such aid to its successful progress. On the contrary, in the corrupt ages of the church, we shall find it was always the custom to endeavour to bring over kings and princes to the Christian faith in the first place, and then, by the influence of the chiefs, the common people adopted it of course. But those princes had generally political reasons for professing Christianity, and therefore their conversion is no argument in favour of the proper evidence of Christianity in after times. What cause of triumph would it have been to unbelievers of the present age, if the Jewish high-priests, and the Roman governors, had been converted in the first instance, and the body of the Jewish nation and of the Roman empire, had been brought over to the same profession afterwards! In what light would the transaction have been regarded at this day? Let this be considered by those who object to the evidence of Christianity on account of the Jewish rulers, the Roman governors, and other persons of power and influence, not having been converted in the first instance.



We are now accompanying Paul and Barnabas in their first progress, which began from Antioch, to preach the Gospel, and especially to the Gentiles, though we shall find that wherever they came, they preached in the first place to the Jews only, that they might have no reasonable cause of complaint that they were despised or overlooked, or even that a due preference was not given to them. From Antioch they first went to Cyprus, the country of Barnabas, where their ministry was honoured by the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the governor of the island, and where Elymas, the Magian, who opposed them, was miraculously struck blind.

With respect to this miracle, I should have observed, that the blindness was not to be perpetual, but only for a time. *Thou shalt be blind*, says Paul to him, *not seeing the sun for a season*. The prediction, therefore, was two-fold, no doubt to make it more evident that the hand of God was in it. Had this Elymas been only seized with blindness, and ever after continued blind, it might have been supposed to have happened from various natural causes, though still it would have been remarkable that it should have taken place at this particular critical time, and immediately upon Paul's pronouncing that it should be so. But that he should recover his sight afterwards, according to a prediction delivered before he was seized with blindness at all, would leave no room to doubt of the hand of God being in it.

Thus were these *apostles*, as in one sense we may call *Barnabas* as well as *Paul*, distinguished in the outset of their progress, which could not fail greatly to encourage them; and the news of it going before them wherever they went, would secure them a more favourable reception in other places.

13. *Pamphylia* was a maritime province of *Asia Minor*, north-west of Paphos in Cyprus.

It is evident from the subsequent history, that *John*, or *Mark*, left these missionaries on account of the prospect there was of the great difficulty or opposition they expected to meet with in this progress; and on this account Paul would not admit him to accompany him a second time.

14. *Pisidia* is an inland province of *Asia Minor*, north of Pamphylia.

This *Antioch* was a much less considerable city than the metropolis of Syria, of the same name.

15. The great purpose for which the synagogues were

erected among the Jews, which does not appear to have been in use till after the return from the Babylonish Captivity, was the reading of the Scriptures; and this was probably the principal means of preserving that people from falling into idolatry, and of producing that inviolable attachment to their law and their religion, by which they were for ever after, and are to this day, distinguished. The Christians, in imitation of the Jews, read both the books of the *New*, as well as those of the *Old Testament*, in their places of worship; and after the reading of the Scriptures, any person present might, with the leave of the ruler of the synagogue among the Jews, or the bishop or elders among the Christians, explain it, in a discourse to the people; after which the Christians always proceeded to prayer, and the administration of the Lord's supper. Originally, *preaching* was nothing more than this occasional expounding of the Scriptures, which were read in course.

16.\* These two strangers being invited to speak, *Paul* takes the opportunity to lead the attention of his Jewish audience to the promises of God to the people of Israel by *David*, shewing them that they were fulfilled in Christ, to whom likewise *John the Baptist*, who was always popular among the Jews, gave witness. He also shews that several things in the ancient prophets were accomplished in Christ.

20. If we add the time of all the Judges together, we shall find they make this number of *four hundred and fifty years*; but some of these judges must have been contemporary with others; for the whole period of the Israelites being governed by judges, was by no means of that length. *Paul* might mean the whole period from the birth of *Isaac*, in which the promises of God to *Abraham* began to be fulfilled, till the time of the prophet *Samuel*.†

21. This must include part of the administration of *Samuel*.‡

25.§ He dwells more particularly on the testimony of *John*, because it would not be lightly disregarded by Jews, among whom he appears to have been very popular.

26. With great prudence the apostle says nothing to them at present of his commission to preach to the Gentiles.

\* *Ye men of Israel, and ye that fear God.* "By the former, meaning the Jews: by the latter, the *Gentile worshippers.*" *Mede*, p. 21.

† "After these transactions, which lasted about four hundred and fifty years, he gave them judges." *N. T.* 1729. See *Le Clerc*; *Bowyer*; *Doddridge*.

‡ See *Doddridge*.

§ "*Vulg.* affirmatively, *Quem me arbitramini esse non sum ego*, alluding to *John i. 19, 20.*" *Bowyer*. See *Doddridge*.



27.\* It is remarkable also how he indirectly apologizes for the conduct of the Jewish *rulers*, not to exasperate these Jews unnecessarily.

30. It is impossible not to observe how, upon all occasions, the apostle represents Christ as a person who spake and acted by a commission from God, whose power it was that appeared in all his miracles, and in his resurrection. Had he been God himself, or a great super-angelic spirit, the Maker of the world, who could not have been affected by the death of his body, there would have been no particular occasion for the interposition of God to raise him from the dead. He might have raised himself by his own proper power. For if, as is supposed, he had made himself that body, he might have brought it to life again. But we see it was necessary that God should raise him from the dead.

33. This *second psalm* is often quoted in the New Testament, as referring to the Messiah, and this appears to have been the opinion of the Jews of that age.†

34. In this he alludes to *Isaiah* lv. 3.‡

35. This *other psalm* is *Ps. xvi. 10.*§

36. To *see corruption*, is to *die*, which is probably all that David meant when he used the expression. But it was more literally fulfilled in Christ, who, though he did die, was not so long in the grave as to see corruption. But we are to judge for ourselves as to the right application of passages in the *Old Testament* to Christ, and the times of the Gospel, as well as the apostles, who would naturally make the most of these references, and in their circumstances would probably imagine that there were more of them than there really were.

39. We observe that Christ is not here said to have purchased by his death and sufferings the forgiveness of our sins, but simply, that God had authorized him, as he had done other prophets before him, to assure men of pardon of their sins upon repentance; and that this commission respected all sins without exception, and was not confined to those for which provision was made in the ceremonial law of Moses.|| At this time the Jews laid a most unreasonable stress on the laws of Moses, as if the favour of God

\* See *Le Cene*, p. 657; *Bowyer*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

‡ See *Dodson*, p. 340; *Le Clerc*; N. T. 1729; *Doddridge*.

§ See *Chap. ii. 31, supra*, p. 394.

|| "That he was not a proper sacrifice, that he made no real atonement, is evident from this: The offences expiated by sacrifices were, generally, of a ceremonial nature; those which Christ removed, of a moral. St. Paul points out this distinction." *Com. and Ess. II. p. 290.*

necessarily accompanied the observance of them ; forgetting that the declaration of the mercy of God to penitents was prior to the law of Moses, and independent of it, as Paul in his epistles frequently urges.

41. This was a very awful warning of the judgments of God which would follow the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews. The passages the apostle quotes to them are to be found *Isaiah* xxviii. 14, and *Hubak*. i. 5.

42. These *Gentiles* probably attended out of curiosity on this occasion, or being devout persons, like Cornelius, might have been in the habit of doing it. Also, they might have had some intimation that this preaching of Paul and Barnabas did not relate to the Jews only, but that the *Gentiles* were interested in it. For it was some years after the conversion of Cornelius ; and the news of the preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles* at Antioch in Syria, could not but have reached to the neighbouring cities, as this of Antioch in Pisidia. Besides, the conversion of *Sergius Paulus*, the Roman governor of Cyprus, was a more recent transaction, and probably known to them.

43. That is, to adhere to the profession which they had made of being Christians.

44. *The Jews*, proud of their privilege of being the peculiar people of God, could not bear to see the *Gentiles* so particularly noticed by the preachers of the Gospel. And if even the Christian Jews bore this so ill, as we have seen, it can be no wonder that it should so highly offend those who were not yet converted to Christianity. By the crowds of *Gentiles* drawn together by these Christians, when they had been able to make but little impression upon them, in favour of the institutions of Moses, so as to make proselytes of them, their envy and indignation would be raised to a still higher pitch. It would naturally make them more inveterate against the Gospel, and on this account the apostles, with great prudence, had always preached to the *Jews* in the first place wherever they went. For, after preaching openly to the *Gentiles* in any place, there was but little prospect of gaining any more *Jews*.

45. They *waxed bold* in proportion to the opposition they met with, which required greater exertion on their part.

They were *unworthy*, that is, they shewed by their conduct that they did not deserve the favours that were offered them.

46. So plain are many of the prophecies concerning the



benefits of the *Messiah's* kingdom extending to the *Gentiles*, and of their not being confined to the Jews only, that we are apt to wonder how they should have been overlooked, or misunderstood. But the Jews had always interpreted them of the subjection of the Gentile world to the dominion of the Messiah; and when that idea was given up by the Christian Jews, they still supposed that the Gentiles must become proselytes to Judaism before they could be entitled to the blessings of Christianity.

48. By *ordained to eternal life*, we are to understand those who were disposed to receive the Gospel, and those who had no invincible prejudice against it: \* for by *eternal life* we are to understand the gospel, which is the means of bringing men to eternal life. That by any arbitrary decree of God, independent of the good dispositions and good works of men, some should be predestinated to eternal life, while others are doomed to eternal damnation, is a doctrine far from being favoured by the Scriptures, and is so contrary to all idea of *equity* in the Divine government, that it must be rejected at any rate. No religion can be true, and come from God, that is so unfavourable to virtue and goodness among men. The Scriptures, as well as reason, and the light of nature, uniformly speak a very different language. The earnest expostulations of the Almighty with sinners, sufficiently prove that they are naturally capable of having some real effect upon those to whom they are addressed. Indeed, without this, the conduct of God towards men would be a most absurd and cruel tantalizing of them, holding out to them, and earnestly intreating their acceptance of, what they had no power of receiving. If persons be absolutely *dead*, and motionless, who would think of urging them to rise and exert themselves? And yet this is literally the case, according to the representations that some make of religion.

50. These were probably their own proselytes, such as our Saviour says were *tenfold more the children of hell than themselves*, or those who, like Cornelius, had been brought to the belief of the one true God, and therefore were well disposed towards the Jews, and adopted their prejudices against the Christians.

They raised this persecution by the interest they had with the magistrates of the place. All the persecutions the

\* "Those who were in a ready posture, and disposed to or for eternal life." Mede, p. 21. See Le Clerc; Bowyer; Doddridge; Pearce.

Christians met with, then and long afterwards, arose from the Jews only. The Roman government had not then taken any umbrage at them.

51. This was to express their own innocence, and that the Jews themselves were the cause of all the evils that would follow the rejection of the gospel. This conduct of theirs was agreeable to our Saviour's particular instructions.\*

*Iconium* is a town in Lycaonia, to the north of Antioch in Pisidia, and in the very centre of Asia Minor.

52. To be *filled with the holy spirit*, means their partaking of the miraculous gifts of the spirit, or some supernatural powers, especially that of speaking unknown tongues, which shewed that the power of God accompanied the preaching of the Gospel in that early age. When by this means the truth and divinity of the Gospel were sufficiently authenticated, those supernatural gifts were properly withdrawn. We are now left to the natural influence of that doctrine which we have sufficient reason to think was then preached with so much power. We ought, therefore, to give the greater attention to it; and utterly inexcusable shall we be, if we do not, in a case so interesting to us all. For, what are all the concerns of this life, which is so transitory, to those of another, which has no end?

XIV. We are still attending to the progress made by Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles, which was probably begun A. D. 45, and ended A. D. 47, or the beginning of 48. Their success we have seen to have been considerable, notwithstanding the most determined opposition from the most unbelieving Jews, and those of the Gentiles with whom they had influence, and we shall see much of the same spirit in what is now before us.

1. These were probably proselytes, who attended the Jewish synagogues.

2. Of the influence the Jews had over the proselytes, we have had several examples. They were frequently more bigotted, and more violent, than the Jews themselves.

5. They stoned them as blasphemers. The interest of *the Jews*, in many places, was so great, that they were permitted to execute their own laws.

8. We have before had several instances of beggars labouring under incurable disorders, being made the subjects of miracles, as, from the nature of the thing, no miracles

\* See *Matt. x. 14*; *Mark vi. 11*.



could be more unexceptionable, their persons and their cases being known to almost every body.

9. It cannot be supposed that any faith in this lame man was necessary to his cure; for many cures had been performed where no such faith is mentioned. But it appears to have been necessary that the person who wrought the miracle should perceive in himself a divine impulse, called *faith*, to do it, and the apostle perceiving symptoms of the same divine impulse upon the mind of the cripple himself, would be the more encouraged to pronounce his cure. Our Saviour, upon many occasions, observed a similar faith in those who applied to him for a cure. In whatever manner this faith was produced, if it had been nothing more than a mere imagination, it could never have made a man walk who had never walked before, or make a man see who had been born blind.

11, 12. The Greeks imagined that it was not uncommon for their gods to assume *the likeness of men*, and to travel up and down on the earth. In their mythology there are many stories of this kind.\* *Jupiter*, the chief of their gods, had often done so, and had sometimes been attended by *Mercury*.

Probably *Barnabas* was a man of a larger size, and of a better appearance than *Paul*,† whose bodily appearance, he himself says, had nothing to recommend it, but who was the more active of the two, and the chief speaker.

13. The temple and statue of *Jupiter* were probably near the gate of *the city*.‡ These *garlands* were put both on the victims and on the statues of their gods.

14. This was to shew their abhorrence of these proceedings.

15. That is, they had no natural advantages over themselves, what they did being by the power of God. None of the Heathens had imagined that the earth, the heavens and the sea, &c. had been the work of God; for they were supposed to have existed prior to their gods. The earliest and the most distinguished of their divinities were the sun, moon and stars, together with the earth itself, and afterwards men, who had been deified by their survivors.

19. This was probably after some interval of time, for the transition from a design to worship these preachers of the gospel, to the stoning of them, cannot be supposed to have been very sudden. But after some time, the people

\* See *Doddridge*.

† See *Chrysostom* in *Doddridge*.

‡ See *Doddridge*. "Brought, &c. to the door of the house, where the two apostles were." *Bowyer*.

of this town, having had sufficient knowledge of Paul and Barnabas, that they were nothing more than other men, might afterwards be persuaded by the Jews, who had great influence over them, that all their miracles were wrought by some evil spirits, for some unknown bad purposes, and thus be brought into all their measures.

26. Their route on their return was through the same places through which they had made their progress, excepting Cyprus.

XV. We have now observed the progress of the gospel about twenty years from the first promulgation of it after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the descent of the spirit upon his apostles and followers. For the space of about ten of these years, the preaching of it was confined to the Jews, or Jewish proselytes, it being wisely provided that their minds should not be prejudiced against the gospel by the immediate offer of it to the Gentiles. But now that the great harvest, as it were, of the Jews was got in, and the prejudices of the rest of the nation were become inveterate, so that there remained little hope of gaining any more of *them*, it pleased God that, according to the council of his own will, and agreeable to his benevolence to the whole race of man, as their common Parent, the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, without submitting to the burdensome yoke of the Mosaic dispensation. That this was no scheme of the apostles, in order to extend their power and authority, is evident from the reluctance with which they were brought into it. They had the prejudices of other Jews, and thought that all the blessings of the gospel were to be confined to themselves, or such Gentiles as should first become proselytes to their religion, by being circumcised, and observing the whole law; and repeated miraculous interpositions, and new illuminations were necessary to make them adopt an idea so new and strange to them as the preaching of the gospel to uncircumcised Gentiles.

In this commission, however, the apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas* particularly distinguished themselves. We have seen one of their journeys for this purpose through Cyprus, and the interior parts of *Asia Minor*, after which they returned to Antioch, the place from which they had set out. We shall now see how they were received at Jerusalem.

1. It is rather surprising that, after the account which *Peter* gave [*Chap. xi. 5—17*] of his conduct in preaching the gospel to *Cornelius* and his friends, ten years before this



time, in which it appeared that the whole was from God himself, (the holy spirit having fallen upon Cornelius and his friends, even before they had been baptized,) any Christians should remain dissatisfied with it, and still insist, as we here see, that none should be received into the Christian church, unless they were first circumcised, and conformed in all respects to the law of Moses. They must have thought that the Divine approbation of Cornelius and his friends, and the provision for preaching the gospel to them, was not intended to supersede their being circumcised, and their being obliged to conform to the law of Moses afterwards. In fact, they must have differed in *opinion* from the apostles, drawing different conclusions from the same facts. It is evident, indeed, that the mere opinion or authority of the apostles did not weigh much with the Christians of that age. They would follow them no farther than they were persuaded they had a direct authority from God, or from Christ; and in a matter that was so sacred with them as the observance of the *law*, which they had no doubt came from God, they were not easy to be convinced. This must be observed in excuse for the very strong prejudices of these very early Jewish Christians, prejudices which were never entirely removed, not even by all that Paul wrote to this purpose afterwards.

This fact is of considerable value in the evidences of Christianity: for, can it be supposed that men with such strong prejudices as these in favour of the law of Moses and its most burdensome observances, and of course with every other Jewish prejudice, a prejudice not shaken by the authority of men divinely inspired, should have been brought to receive such a Messiah as Jesus, without the most overbearing evidence? It is plain that it was no influence or authority of the apostles, or any other persons, who might be supposed to have any end to serve by this scheme, that could have any weight with them. They reasoned and judged for themselves, from facts that were known to themselves as well as to the apostles.

3. These had not the strong prejudices of the Jews of Jerusalem, who are always mentioned as the most knowing in the law, and the most attached to it. The Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem were always, in our Saviour's time, the most attentive to every thing in which religion was concerned, and yet it was at Jerusalem that Christianity was first promulgated and received, a very unpromising scene to have been chosen for an imposture.

7. It is evident that the apostles did not consider themselves as bound by any absolute authority from God, or from Christ, respecting this case, for then there could have been no room for all this consideration and reasoning; though they had very plain facts to reason from, and therefore might draw a very safe conclusion. Still it was no more than a *conclusion from facts*, and not an express formal *precept* from God, how to proceed in the business. It has pleased God that, in all things, men should use their own reason and discretion, and be conducted as little as possible by mere *authority*.

8. By this he shewed that they were then the proper subjects of Christ's kingdom, without circumcision; so he reasoned from facts.

9. By this he shewed that they were as *pure* and acceptable to God, though they had simply expressed their belief of the gospel,\* as the Jews were in consequence of having been circumcised.

11. That is, that the Jews and Gentiles will, without distinction, be made equally partakers of the blessings of the gospel, here and hereafter.

12. This was adducing an evidence from fact, of the Divine approbation of their ministry, having given his attestation of it by *miraculous works*, which they had been enabled to perform, though they had not directed any Gentile convert to be circumcised.

13. This is that *James* who is called [Gal. i. 19] *the brother of Jesus*, and the author of the epistle of *James*, and not James the brother of John, and one of the sons of Zebedee. *He* had been beheaded by Herod, about six years before this time. [Chap. xii. 2.]

17. *Peter*, and after him, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, had reasoned from *facts*. Here *James*, in addition to this, alleges ancient *prophecies*, which he apprehended foretold that the blessings of the gospel were not to be confined to the Jews; and there are many prophecies which certainly express as much. But I must observe, as I have frequently done, that we are to judge for ourselves with respect to the interpretation of ancient prophecies, as well as the apostles, who were very apt to apply them without sufficient caution. This prophecy of *Amos* [ix. 11] seems to relate to the final return of

\* "La foi purifie les cœurs, parce qu'on ne peut croire fortement et sincèrement, sans s'appliquer à obéir à l'évangile." *Le Clerc*.



the Jews to their own country, rather than to the propagation of the gospel.\*

28.† These things were either *necessary* in themselves, or to avoid giving too much offence to the Jews.

We are not to infer from these words, that the apostles were conscious of any particular inspiration of *the Spirit of God* on this occasion,‡ and still less that other assemblies of Christians, called *councils*, would necessarily be superintended by the Spirit of God, so as to be infallible in their decrees. But they inferred from the descent of the Spirit upon the Gentile converts, that they had a divine sanction in not imposing the yoke of the Jewish law upon such converts. The particular articles, to the observance of which they thought proper to oblige the Gentile Christians, were probably selected by themselves, for what they thought to be good reasons.

29. All these things had a connexion with the Heathen religion; *fornication*,§ and the most abominable impurities, being practised in their religious rites, and *blood* being also eaten in them, some of their gods being thought to feed upon it.|| It is probable, therefore, that the design of all these prohibitions was to keep the new converts at the greatest distance from idolatry, and to bring them back to the religion of the ancient patriarchs; for the precept not to eat blood was given to *Noah*¶ prior to the Jewish dispensation, perhaps to impress the minds of men with an idea of God being the giver of life, and therefore that the making use of animals for food (which implies taking their lives) should be received as a permission from God, who, at the same time, absolutely forbids the taking away the life of man.

It is evident that the early Christians did not understand this precept of abstaining from blood, as merely meant not to give offence to the Jews; for all the Christian world abstained from eating blood till of late years, and indeed still do so, except in this western part of the world. *Austin* particularly notices it as being so in his time.\*\* There are

\* See *Le Clerc; Doddridge*.

† "These things which are of necessity." *Bowyer*.

‡ See *Burnet on Art. xxi. ad fin.; Le Clerc; Com. and Ess. I. p. 126*.

§ "Perhaps here and at *ver. 20*, for *πορνείας* [*fornication*] read *χοιρείας*, *to abstain from the flesh of swine*, by which means, all the precepts will agree in not being of a moral nature." *Anonym. in Bowyer. See Impr. Vers.*

|| See *Lev. xvii. 10, Vol. XI. p. 211*.

¶ See *Gen. ix. 4—6, Vol. II. p. 377; XI. pp. 56, 57; Wellbeloved's Bible, 1819, Notes, on Gen.*

\*\* *Spencer, p. 608. (P.) See Origen in Lardner, II. p. 538. See ibid. III. pp. 151, 152; IV. pp. 301, 504.*

now also different opinions upon this subject with us; but the generality of Christians now think that as all distinction of meats is set aside by the gospel, at least with respect to the Gentiles, *this* should also; and that the general observation of our Saviour, [*Matt.* xv. 11; *Mark* vii. 18,] that *nothing which goes into a man defiles him*, ought to extend to this case as well as every other. We ought, however, to remember, that the moral precepts of the gospel, the love of our God and of our neighbour, are the only great things to be attended to, and that all matters of opinion and peculiar practices ought to be subservient to them. *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*, without being censorious with respect to others.

30. We have seen in what manner the apostles and elders at Jerusalem decided with respect to the observance of the Jewish rites by the Gentile converts, viz. that they should not be obliged to be circumcised, or conform to the law of Moses, any farther than to abstain from meats offered to idols, from things strangled, and from fornication; all which things had an intimate connexion with idolatry, being practised in their religious rites; and the eating of blood was particularly offensive to the Jews, so that as things then were, they could not have united in one body, having mutual intercourse and society, without some such agreement as this.

Having also attended *Paul* and *Barnabas* in their first journey to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, we now proceed to another of *Paul*; beginning with the countries he had visited before, and extending through other parts of Asia Minor and Greece. This was probably A. D. 51, or twenty-two years after the death of Christ.

32. These are persons who had been sent with *Paul* and *Barnabas* from Jerusalem, to carry the decree of the apostles and elders to Antioch. *Prophets* were teachers of a superior character and gifts, and seem not to have been confined to particular churches.

34. This *Silas* was called *Sylvanus* by the Romans, and is frequently mentioned in this history, and in the epistles of *Paul*.

37—40. We are not to think it any thing extraordinary, or to be offended, that *Paul* and *Barnabas*, being men of like passions with other men, should have a difference of this nature. *Barnabas* being uncle to *Mark*, who was the son of his sister Mary, would naturally think more favourably of him; and he might know him better than *Paul*, who,



being of a quick and enterprising temper, might be too soon offended with the conduct of Mark, though it is most probable that he had quitted them through fear. There is evidence enough in the epistles of Paul of his having been afterwards fully reconciled to Mark. It was he who afterwards joined himself particularly to Peter, and wrote his gospel by his instructions. He is also said to have been the first Christian bishop of Alexandria in Egypt.

XVI. 1. The mother of *Timothy*, as we find in the epistle of Paul to him, was called *Eunice*, and his grandmother, *Lois*; and they were both pious persons. From a child, as *Paul* reminds him [2 *Ep.* iii. 15], he had been taught by them the holy Scriptures. They were probably converted to Christianity in the former journey of Paul to *Lystra*.

The Jews had less objection to the marriage of Jewish women to the men of other nations, than to the marriage of their men with foreign women.

3. It should seem that there was no absolute necessity for the *circumcision* of Timothy; but as he was to accompany Paul in his journey, and one of his parents being of Jewish extraction, it would have given too much offence to the Jews, and have rendered his ministry altogether ineffectual among them, if he had not been circumcised. With respect to persons whose parents were both Gentiles, as Titus [*Gal.* ii. 3], Paul boldly stood for the privileges of the Gentiles, and opposed circumcision.

6. There is no particular mention of Paul preaching in *Galatia*, or of his success there; but it must have been at this time that he planted those Christian churches in this country, to which his epistle is directed.

8. This was a town on the sea coast, built near the more ancient city of *Troy*, and, as it is said, out of the ruins of it.\*

10. We find a great variety of methods in which God was pleased to signify his will to those who acted by commission from him; and in many of them there was room left for exercising their own reason and judgment. In this case they were left to infer the Divine will from the circumstances of a dream.

It is observable that from this time, *Luke*, the writer of this book, speaks in the plural number. *We* did so and so, from which it is concluded that here he joined *Paul*,† and

\* See Sir T. Browne's *Tract X., Of Troas*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

it appears that he never left him afterwards, but attended him even in his voyage to Rome.

11. This was an island in the *Ægean Sea*, or *Archipelago*.

12. This was not *the first*, or *chief city* in *Macedonia*, for that was *Thessalonica*; but it was the first Roman colony in that country.\* This colony was settled by *Julius Cæsar*, and enlarged by *Augustus*, as appears by coins that have been found there. On this account we find the citizens called themselves Romans, and considered themselves bound by the laws of Rome.

13. This was a *proseucha*, or oratory, or a building, or inclosure made on purpose for pious people to resort to, and perform their devotions in. These buildings are said to have been distinguished from synagogues by their having no roofs, and there being no reading of the law in those places. It is said that they were commonly built in the neighbourhood of rivers, probably for the convenience of bathing, which frequently accompanied the devotions of the Jews.†

14. This does not imply any miraculous influence upon the mind of *Lydia*, any more than there was upon that of Pharaoh, whose heart God is said to have hardened. But there is a proper sense in which every thing in nature is ascribed to God, the Author of nature, and we are more particularly directed to consider things in this light, when God, in the course of his providence, makes any natural use of the tempers and dispositions of men. Thus the natural bad disposition of Pharaoh was eminently subservient to the Divine purposes, and so also was the natural good disposition of this Lydia. Besides, this *opening of the heart* of Lydia, (which, in the Jewish phraseology, only means a candid, teachable disposition,) is only said to have prepared her for hearing, or giving due attention to the preaching of Paul. What he said had the influence which it naturally would have upon a mind previously well disposed.‡

15. We cannot particularly say who were included in the *household* of Lydia, but certainly if she had young children, they must have been comprehended. Abraham was circumcised with his household, which we are informed included not only Ishmael, who was then thirteen years old, but his

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Bowyer*; *Doddridge*.

† See Josephus's *Life*, Sect. liv.; *Mede*, p. 67; *Prideaux* (Pt. i. B. vi.), II. pp. 556—558; *Lardner*, I. pp. 110—112; *Doddridge*; *Harwood's Introd.* (Sect. xiv.) on "the Oratories of the Jews," II. pp. 175, 176, 179.

‡ See *Le Clerc*.



slaves also. The circumcision of his household, therefore, was a thing that respected Abraham himself only, and what it became him to do in the case.\* The apostles, therefore, having this clear case before them, and baptism being an institution similar to circumcision, they would naturally apply it in the same indiscriminate manner, that is, to all the proper household of the person baptized. The baptism of a child, therefore, is not to be considered as any thing that is done *in the name of the child*, so as to lay it under any obligation in future life, but only as the act of the parent. It is what belongs to his profession of Christianity, and being a Christian himself, he will of course think himself obliged to educate his children in the Christian faith.

16. *Prayer* here means *house of prayer*, or oratory, mentioned above. What is here mentioned as a *spirit of divination*, is in the original rendered a *spirit of Python*, which is synonymous to *Ob*, in *Lev. xix. 31*,† such as that with which the priests of the god Apollo were supposed to be inspired. It was usual for those persons who pretended to be inspired by the Heathen gods, and foretell things to come, to assume all the appearance of madness; and sometimes they practised such rites, and treated themselves in such a manner, as actually produced a kind of frenzy or madness; and the uncommon and incoherent things which they pronounced in that state of mind, accompanied with much violence of gesticulation, and strangeness of aspect, were attributed to some invisible spirit, by which they were supposed to be agitated in that manner. Afterwards, we find all kinds of insanity ascribed to the agency of some invisible spirits or demons; and these being supposed to know more than men, their sayings were observed, as, though seemingly obscure and mysterious, proceeding from superior knowledge; and those who had the care and management of insane persons frequently availed themselves of this circumstance for the purpose of gain, encouraging people to resort to them, to have their fortunes told, and to have difficult questions resolved. In the Eastern countries madmen are treated with particular respect to this day, and their sayings noticed, as being inspired.

17. As these insane people had their lucid intervals, and were often perfectly sensible in some respects, though not in all, they were not strangers to what was passing in the

\* See, on *Gen. xvii. 10*, Vol. XI. pp. 76, 77.

† *Spencer*, p. 426. (P.) See Vol. XI. pp. 215, 216; and (on *1 Sam. xxviii. 7*), p. 386.

country; and there was often a mixture of knowledge and information in their incoherent rhapsodies, as we see in the demoniacs of our Saviour's time, who sometimes shouted after him, and called him what they had heard others say of him, *the Son of God*, and other appellations characteristic of the *Messiah*. So this woman having caught these words, perhaps from *Paul* himself, some of his companions, or others who had heard him speak, repeated them in this manner.

18. That is, he restored her to her right mind, so that she called after him no more in that manner.\*

19. The *market-place*, or *forum*, was the place in which the magistrates sat to hear causes, and in which the people were always assembled on any interesting occasion, as at Rome.

21. These *Philippians*, I have observed, were a colony of *Romans*, and were therefore bound by the Roman laws, according to which no new religion could be introduced without the leave of the senate, after an examination by proper officers.†

22. This seems to have been a tumultuous and irregular proceeding, and they were stripped and beaten (which was always done with great severity) upon the naked body, without any regular trial.‡

24. § They took all the precautions they could to prevent their escape, expecting no mercy themselves from the magistrates who interested themselves in the case.

25. It is impossible not to observe, upon this occasion, the power of a good conscience, in enabling persons to bear trials and persecutions for the sake of truth and obedience to God. On this occasion we see our Saviour's promises [*Matt.* v. 11, 12] fully verified: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you; rejoice and be exceedingly glad." He assured them that in that state of persecution

\* On *vers.* 16—18, see Sykes's *Enquiry*, Ed. 2, 1737, pp. 53, 54; "Essay on the Literal Sense," pp. 67—69; *Further Enquiry*, pp. 84—89; *Lardner*, l. pp. 476—479, 482; V. p. 144; *Doddridge*.

"Our Lord and his apostles use the *popular* style and language: they speak of the possession of demons, of the spirit of Python, of the wisdom of serpents, and of a grain of wheat *dying* before the principles of vegetation take place. This was the philosophy, these the theories, of those times; and it was far from being the design of our Lord and his apostles to disabuse and undeceive men in these uninteresting speculations. They employed the diction and phraseology then in common use, just as the *Newtonians* and modern philosophers speak in the popular style and idiom." *Harwood's Introd.* (Sect. xxv.), ll. pp. 363, 364.

† See *Sueton*, *August.* Sect. xciii.; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

‡ See 2 *Cor.* xi. 25; 1 *Thess.* ii. 2.

§ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.



they should receive tenfold more in this present life, notwithstanding their sufferings.

Not that they were insensible to pain, but their inward satisfaction much more than balanced it. So here we see *Paul* and *Silas* more happy in prison than their persecutors who put them into it.

26. This could not have been the natural effect of an *earthquake*, but proves that this, as well as *the opening of the door*, and *the loosing of the bands*, were miraculous.

27. For then he must have borne the punishment that was to have been inflicted upon his prisoners, and many of them were probably sentenced to death.

30. That is, he brought them from the inner prison, where, for their greater security, they had been confined; and this he naturally did, on finding that he had no power over them.

What the gaoler precisely meant by these words, in the hurry and confusion in which he pronounced them, is not quite certain. It might be only *What shall I do?* without any distinct meaning at all. But considering Paul's answer, and what follows, we may perhaps infer that he had been a hearer of Paul's preaching; and being now convinced of his prisoners being under the protection of God, and having a commission from him, inquired about that *salvation*, concerning which they had preached, and which had been the subject of the insane woman's shouting.\*

31. Upon this I would observe, that though *faith in Christ*, or a belief in the Christian religion, is here and in other places mentioned as the only condition of salvation, it is always to be understood to be accompanied with *good works*, the proper fruits of faith: for, upon all occasions, repentance and obedience are made essential to future happiness; and nothing can be more contrary to the uniform tenor of the gospel, than that a good disposition of mind, and a virtuous conduct, are not essential to a good Christian. To all other pretenders to friendship with Christ, and interest in him, our Lord will say at the last, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity*.

33. This is the second instance in this chapter of a whole household being baptized, including, no doubt, young children, if there were any such in them, for the reasons that I have given before.†

37. As *Paul* was free born, it is probable that his father had been made a freeman of *Rome*, perhaps for services ren-

\* See Doddridge.

† See *supra* on ver. 15; also Vol. V. p. 272.

dered to the state, or it might have been purchased with money. It is well known to have been a law of the Roman empire, that no Roman citizen could be *beaten with rods*,\* and to claim the privilege falsely, was punishable with death, by a law of the emperor *Claudius*, who was then reigning.

59. Paul's insisting upon this piece of respect being paid him, was not only right in itself, and due to his character, who had been grossly insulted and abused,† but would have a good effect with respect to the converts he had made in that place, and cause them to be treated with more respect when he was gone.

XVII. We have seen the effect of the first preaching of the gospel in *Europe* by the apostle *Paul*, accompanied by *Silas*, *Timothy* and *Luke*. The former of these was chosen by Paul in preference to *Mark*, who went with *Barnabas*, because he had not shewn sufficient courage on a former occasion. In this we see *Silas* by no means deficient. Probably by his peculiar zeal and activity he had made himself more conspicuous than the other companions of Paul, in consequence of which he exposed himself to be apprehended, scourged and imprisoned, along with him, while nothing is said of the sufferings of the rest; which, however, by no means implies that they were not sufficiently ready to do their duty, and to suffer in it also, if properly called to it.

The first opening of their commission, as we may call it, was at *Philippi*, a Roman colony in *Macedonia*. We shall now attend these missionaries to other towns in the same country.

1. These were all cities in *Macedonia*. *Amphipolis* was originally a famous colony of the Athenians, and *Apollonia*, of the Corinthians, the former upon the same river *Strymon* with *Philippi*, and the latter near the sea. *Thessalonica* was the metropolis of the country. It was so called by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, on account of a victory gained by him in *Thessaly*. It is even now a place of some note, called *Salonichi*, the most commodious sea-port in those parts.

Here the apostle made some stay, and founded a Christian church, to which he addressed two of his epistles, those to the *Thessalonians*, and the first that he wrote. Here it is probable that *Luke* left him for the present, while *Silas* and *Timothy* continued with him.

2. *Paul*, though he had received so many provocations from the Jews, did not neglect them; but wherever there

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Lardner*, I. pp. 222, 223; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

† See *Lardner*, I. p. 181.



was a synagogue, he addressed himself to them in the first place. At Philippi there was no proper synagogue, but only an *oratory*, or house of prayer: but this being the capital of the country, the Jews were probably more numerous, and better accommodated. Besides the propriety of preaching the gospel to the Jews in the first place, the assemblies of the Jews, proselytes, and other devout persons, at the synagogues, afforded the apostle a good opportunity of making himself and his business generally known. The Heathens had no assemblies of this kind. Their worship consisted of nothing but sacrifices, riotous, obscene, or, at the best, unmeaning rites, without any provision for the instruction of the people, or public prayers. When, therefore, there was no Jewish synagogue in a place, we find the apostle addressing the people in the market-places, or wherever he found people assembled, and at leisure to converse.

3. The great objection to the gospel with the Jews, was then, and is still, *a suffering Messiah*. This point, therefore, the apostle particularly labours.

5. Here the word *lewd* is not used in its modern sense, but as it was used when this translation of the Scriptures was made, namely, for *rude*, uncivilized persons.

This *Jason* is thought by some to have been a Jew, and a relation of Paul. At least, in the Epistle to the *Romans*, [xvi. 21,] he mentions a person of this name who was his kinsman.

6. We must learn from this not to be moved by popular clamour, or popular prejudices, which are always alarmed at any thing which appears to be *innovation* in religion, how much soever it may be for the service of truth and of mankind. The same offence was given by the Reformers from Popery, and in the same light is every person regarded, who even at this day distinguishes himself by his zeal against prevailing errors, and false notions in religion.\*

7. This must have been advanced by those who had perhaps only heard some confused account of Paul's preaching, or might apprehend that Jesus, being alive, claimed their obedience, contrary to their allegiance to the Roman emperor; and in general they are the most ignorant who are the foremost in clamour and persecution against the friends of truth.

10. This is a very short account of what passed at the first preaching of the gospel in *Thessalonica*, where, from Paul's

\* "C'est ainsi que les persécuteurs accusent ceux qu'ils maltraitent sans raison, des troubles, qu'ils causent eux-mêmes, et dont les autres ne sont qu'une occasion innocente." *Le Clerc*.

epistles to the Christians in that place, he appears to have made a considerable stay, and to have had very great success. The *three Sabbaths* that he is said to have preached in the Jewish synagogue in this place was probably only the beginning of his preaching, and afterwards he probably preached in the house of Jason. Here many were converted from idolatry. Here Paul worked miracles himself, and imparted spiritual gifts to others. Here he laboured with diligence night and day, that the gospel might not be burdensome to the new converts; and to this place the Christians of Philippi sent again and again to his necessities. These and other circumstances are indications of the long stay that Paul made in this place, and of his great success there.\* We see, by *Luke's* not mentioning these particulars in the book of *Acts*, that he wrote with no ostentation, not making the most of every thing that might be for the credit of the apostle, or of the gospel. If miraculous gifts had not been very common in that age, he would naturally have enlarged upon them here.

*Berea* was another city in Macedonia, not far from *Pella*, the birth-place of Alexander the Great.

11. Here the Jews were more candid, and better-disposed, than those of *Thessalonica*. The Jews in general boasted of their *nobility*, as we may call it, in their descent from Abraham, and they could trace their origin higher than any other people in the world, but these were still *more noble*, in a better sense of the word.†

14. According to the best reading and interpretation of the original,‡ there was no artifice or deceit implied in this conduct of the apostle, though there would have been nothing blamable in his conduct if he had withdrawn himself from the power of his enemies in the manner here represented.

16. *Paul* having quitted *Berea*, where he was well received, after having been driven by the persecution of the Jews from *Thessalonica*, left *Timothy* and *Silas* there, and proceeded to *Athens*, where he waited for his companions. This was probably A. D. 52. As *Athens* was the greatest seat of learning in all the Roman empire at that time, and had ever been distinguished for philosophy and all the liberal arts, and where almost all the Roman youth of family and fortune were educated, we cannot help being interested to know in

\* See *Doddridge* on ver. 2.

† "Ayant l'esprit beaucoup plus élevé que le vulgaire, pour s'y exposer pour l'amour de la vérité et de la vertu, dont on ne trouve les véritables idées que dans l'évangile." *Le Clerc*. See *Whitby*, in *Doddridge*.

‡ See *Le Clerc*; *Bowyer*.



what manner Paul, the first preacher of the gospel in that place, conducted himself, and what kind of reception he met with there; and several things are well worth our notice with respect to both. We shall see an example of great prudence in the manner in which Paul behaved in those peculiar circumstances, very different from that of a wild enthusiast, but worthy of one who was fully persuaded that he had a commission from the Most High God, to instruct mankind in the most important and interesting truths; while in the Athenians, in general, we shall see what an obstacle to the reception of new truth is a previous high conceit of men's own wisdom. Not being aware of their own ignorance, they had no desire of farther knowledge, and treated with supercilious contempt all who presumed to instruct them.

It is well known to all persons acquainted with history, that of all the cities of Greece, Athens was the most distinguished for the multitude of its temples and altars; the people being the most attached to the religious rites and ceremonies which had been handed to them from their ancestors. It was on the pretence of attempting an innovation in religion, that the enemies of Socrates, the most eminent of all the philosophers, procured his condemnation in that city.

From this state of Athens, the seat of learning and philosophy, it is impossible not to observe how improbable it was that the world in general should ever have been reformed from idolatry, without divine revelation. It is evident that, as the apostle says, *the world by its own wisdom knew not God*; and when the true knowledge and worship of him was lost in the world, they were never likely to regain it. In a city where the common people were so superstitiously attached to their religious rites, and where the better sort were so conceited of their wisdom and philosophy, there was no great prospect of success for Paul, whose generous and benevolent spirit was much moved at the prospect.\*

17. We see the zeal, as well as the prudence, of Paul, in his whole conduct at Athens. He not only preached to the Jews and their proselytes in their *synagogue*, but entered into conversation on the subject of religion with all persons who were disposed to hear him, and with persons of all ranks and conditions,† not excepting the professors of philosophy, who were numerous there.

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

† See *Harmer*, II. pp. 526, 527, *Note*.

18.\* The *Epicureans* and *Stoics* were the most distinguished sects of philosophy at that time, and the most opposite to one another in their general maxims and tenets, as much so as the Pharisees and Sadducees among the Jews. The Epicureans, who did not choose to deny that there were gods, held that they lived at their ease, and took no thought about the affairs of men, who had come into being without their concurrence; and they held that pleasure was the great end of life. On the other hand, the Stoics, considering the souls of men as parts of the great Soul of the universe, or God, held that they were sufficient for their own happiness in the practice of virtue, to which they made great pretensions. They pretended to be superior to all pain and evil; and when they died, the most prevailing opinion among them was, that their souls, which had been originally detached from the great Soul of the universe, would be absorbed into it again; so that neither they, nor the Epicureans, had any expectation of a proper state of retribution after death.

As the Heathens worshipped many allegorical personages, such as *fevers, shame, famine, &c.*, they who heard Paul preach about a *resurrection*, a word to which they had not been used, without giving particular attention to his meaning, might possibly imagine that it was some new divinity,† or by *strange gods*, they might mean a new system of religion in general.

Though there are some traces of the doctrine of a resurrection having been known to the Heathens, and even to the early Greek philosophers, it was then discarded and ridiculed. This was probably the original revelation of God to mankind, and always retained by the Jews. In the Heathen world it was supplanted by the doctrine of *a separate soul*, capable of being happy or miserable when the body was in the grave, which I conceive to be unknown to the writers of the *Old and New Testament*.

19. *Areopagus* was the most respectable court of justice of Athens and all Greece, consisting of persons of the greatest age and unblemished reputation, and they had cognizance of all matters of religion. Their court was held upon a hill, in the open air, where the judges sat upon

\* See *Le Clerc; Doddridge*.

† "Chrysostom says, that by resurrection, or *anastasis*, they intended a goddess." *Lardner*, V. p. 144. See *Bentley at Boyle's Lecture*, (Sect. ii.) Ed. 5, 1724, pp. 53—55.



benches of stone. Paul had not been brought before this court upon any accusation,\* but merely to give authentic information concerning his doctrine, as it is probable that there were various and uncertain reports spread abroad concerning it.

21. This was always the character of *the Athenians*, and as this city was the resort of persons from all parts of the world, their curiosity would continually be excited and gratified.

22. That is, *much addicted to religion, or the worship of invisible powers.*† He shews his address in not insulting them at the opening of his speech, by which he must naturally have wished to gain their attention and good will.‡

23. That there were in Athens altars erected to *unknown gods*, is evident from ancient writers. These were probably erected on occasion of public calamities, which they ascribed to some gods whom they had not been used to worship, but did not know whom. Paul had the address to take a proper advantage of this circumstance, to lead them to the worship not of *a new god*, for that would have been criminal by their laws, but of that God to whom all national calamities, and all national blessings, were owing, and of whom they were ignorant. The superiority of this God to those whom they had worshipped, he proceeds to explain.§

24. None of the Heathens, not even these wise Athenians, had any notion that their gods had *made the world*, or were prior to it. The world they thought to be eternal, and that the gods, in some way or other, sprang from it.

25. This great God who made all things could not stand in need of the services of man, which was the idea the generality of the Heathens had of their gods, who were represented as being proud of the attention and services of men, and generally as feasting upon the fumes of sacrifices.||

\* Archbishop Potter (*Antiq. B. i. Ch. xix.*) says, that "St. Paul was arraigned before them." But *Le Clerc* says more correctly of *Areopagus*, "Du tems des Romains, ce n'étoit plus qu'un nom, l'autorité étant tout entière entre les mains du Proconsul d'Achaïe; et S. Paul y fut mené non pour être jugé, mais parce que ce lieu étant hors du tumulte, on pouvoit plus facilement l'y entendre qu'ailleurs." See *Doddridge; Pearce*.

† *Demon gods.* See *Mede*, p. 637; *Pearce*.

‡ "The original is peculiarly soft, if any censure was intended; but I apprehend that St. Paul tells them, he perceived they were, *in all things, very devout*. This would give no offence at Athens." *Lardner*, I. p. 193. See *ibid.* V. p. 144; *Le Clerc; Doddridge; Christie's Miscell.* 1789, p. 191; *Impr. Vers.*

§ See *Le Clerc; Hallett*, I. pp. 59, 307—309; *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 111—119; *Doddridge; Pearce*.

|| See *Bentley* at *Boyle's Lecture, Sermon. ii. ad init.*; *Doddridge*.

26.\* This doctrine of the providence of God was the very reverse of that of the *Epicureans*, who thought that the gods took no care of human affairs. It is possible also, that by Paul's observing that God was the common parent of all mankind, he might mean to intimate that he laid no great stress on the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, which the Jews, whom they had before seen in their city, had no doubt boasted of.

28. The marks of the being and providence of God should have led mankind to the knowledge of God; those evidences of natural religion being obvious to all mankind. This quotation is from the poet *Aratus*, who was of *Cilicia*, the country of Paul. It is also found in another Heathen poet.† But it is not probable that these poets had the same idea of the derivation of the human race from God, that Paul had.

29. The Heathens thought that by certain ceremonies of consecration, the intelligence and power of their gods were brought to reside in their statues, of metal, wood, or stone.‡ But as the powers of man have no such residence, it must be very improbable that the powers of the gods should reside in such materials, which had nothing more than the external forms of men. And yet before they made images in the forms of men, the Heathens had only pillars to represent their gods.

32. Paul having given this representation of the state of the Heathen world, with respect to the knowledge and worship of God, proceeds to the proper opening of his commission as a messenger from God, informing them, that though God, out of his unsearchable wisdom, had not hitherto interposed to check their depravity, he had now, in his own proper time, done it, and invited all men to repent and reform their lives; assuring them that he would require an account of their conduct, and give to all mankind according to their works, having fixed a time for that purpose; and as an assurance, and specimen of it, he had already raised up Jesus Christ, who had been put to death by his enemies, to this state of eternal life. But having made this general introduction to his account of the proper evidences of Christianity, and of his mission, he was not

\* "And on the bounds of their respective habitations (having ordered the determined periods of each)." *Pyle in Bowyer*. "Ayant réglé des tems fixés auparavant. C'est-à-dire, ayant marqué les tems, dans sa sagesse éternelle, auxquels les nations différentes de la terre se rendroient maîtresses des lieux qu'elles habitent." *Le Clerc*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*; *Pearce*.

| See *Le Clerc*.



permitted to proceed any farther. The *Epicureans* among them probably laughed at the very mention of the resurrection of the dead, and were wholly indisposed to give any attention to the proofs of it. Others, however, perhaps some of the *Stoics*, who had some general idea of the destruction of the present world, and of the renovation of all things afterwards, wished to hear Paul explain himself farther on the subject. But if they did, it is probable that, finding his ideas so very different from theirs on that subject, they would have been little less disposed to receive it than the Epicureans were.

In the same light manner, without any serious examination, do the generality of modern unbelievers reject the gospel. And in all cases the strongest evidence will not produce conviction, unless it meet with a mind disposed to receive it; and there are *prejudices* sufficient to prevent the reception of any truth, how evident soever in itself, and to minds properly disposed. Unless the soil be prepared for the seed, it can never take root, and the plant come to perfection, how proper soever it be in itself. Happy are they whose minds are free from such prejudices as now indispose many to embrace the gospel, which affords such excellent means of happiness here, and such a sufficient assurance of immortality hereafter.

33. It does not appear that Paul worked any miracle at Athens, though he had done so at other places; but persons who were so indisposed to attend to the evidence that had already been given in other places, were unworthy of having any produced before themselves. Indeed, it was not *evidence* that they objected to, but *the thing itself*, the doctrine of a *resurrection*, which they probably thought incapable of being proved by any evidence.

XVIII. The apostle Paul having made but a short stay at Athens, where he remained unaccompanied by *Timothy* and *Silas*, and where he gained some, but not many, converts, as appeared in the last chapter, proceeded in his journey to other parts of Greece.

1. *Corinth* was one of the most wealthy and luxurious cities in Greece. It was remarkably addicted to voluptuousness. There was in it a temple of *Venus*, to which belonged, it is said, a thousand prostitutes,\* and, like other polished Greeks, the Corinthians were great admirers of eloquence.

\* *Potter* says, "Corinth is remarkable for being a nursery of harlots." *Antiq.* B. iii. Ch. xii.

2. The banishment of the Jews from Rome by the emperor *Claudius*, is mentioned by historians; and from the manner in which one of them speaks of it, it might seem to have arisen from some faction or disturbance occasioned by the preaching of the gospel.\* It appears to have been preached at Rome about this time, but by whom is not known; and the Jews opposing it, as in other places, might perhaps have given rise to the disturbance which alarmed the timid temper of *Claudius*. This banishment of the Jews, being only an order of the emperor, and not a decree of the senate, it expired with his death, about three years afterwards.

This *Aquila* and his wife were perhaps Christians before this time, or they might be made so by Paul.

3. I have observed before, that all the Jews, even those of the most wealthy families, were brought up to some art or profession, by which they could, if reduced to indigence, get their bread. This custom is still generally observed in the East; and if it have no other use, it very properly reminds youth of the uncertainty of every thing in this world. It tends to prepare the mind for all events, even the most calamitous. Paul chose to live by the labour of his hands, rather than be burdensome to his new converts, to cut off all suspicion of his preaching for the sake of living in idleness. This he makes mention of in his epistles. No man comes into the world to be idle, and it is far more reputable to live by one's own labour, than upon the unearned benefactions of others.

4. Here, as in other places, the apostle preached to *the Jews* in the first place, making use of their synagogues, and they abounded in all places of note. And as the Jews were zealous to infuse the knowledge of the one true God, and often succeeded in *this*, where they made no proper proselytes, their instructions were a valuable preparation for the preaching of the gospel.

5. Perhaps *Paul* heard from them of the happy effect of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, without any regard to the Jews, which had been the case particularly in Thessalonica; and, having had little success with the Jews at Corinth, he was urged to come to some conclusion with them, pressing them either to embrace the gospel, after

\* "Judæos, impulsore *Chresto*, assiduè tumultuantes Româ expulit." *Sueton. Claud. Sect. xxv.* See *Lardner*, I. pp. 246, 247; *Doddridge*.



having heard it sufficiently explained and enforced, or to reject it; which it seems they generally did.

7. He was such a person as *Cornelius*, and there appeared to have been many of this character at this time. Such was the happy effect of the Jewish doctrine concerning God.

11. From *Corinth*, Paul wrote both the epistles to the *Thessalonians*, which were the first that he ever wrote: hence he also wrote to the *Galatians*.

In both these places he had made but a short stay, and they had mistaken many important articles of his doctrine, as will appear when we come to consider those epistles.

12. This *Gallio* was brother to the famous philosopher Seneca, who gives him an excellent character. By Luke's speaking of the *deputy*, or *proconsul of Achaia*, which had not always been governed by a proconsul, but was at this particular time, he appears to have been well acquainted with the political state of those times, which is an evidence of the history being genuine, as every other circumstance mentioned or alluded to in this book proves.\*

13. The Jews seem to have been indulged with a power over their countrymen, to compel them to the observance of their own laws, when they did not interfere with the civil state of the countries in which they resided. Perhaps they had sentenced him to some punishment before, and wished to have it confirmed by the Roman governor,† as the Jews at Jerusalem did in the case of our Saviour.

16. *Gallio* might easily perceive the frivolous charges of the Jews against Paul, and that they had nothing to do with the peace and good order of society, which, as a civil magistrate was his only object.

17. This revenge which the *Greek* friends of Paul took of his persecutors seems to have been an irregular proceeding near the tribunal of *Gallio*, which was probably in the *forum*, in the open air, and though within the notice of *Gallio*, he thought proper to neglect it as of no consequence.

The words *all the Greeks* are wanting in the Cambridge MSS., and three other MSS. read *all the Jews took Sosthenes*, who had been a chief ruler of the synagogue, but was never a convert to Christianity. According to this reading, the

\* See Lardner, I. p. 32; Doddridge.

† Perhaps the Jews accused Paul of teaching a religion, which was neither that of the Romans nor of the Jews which they tolerated, but a new religion, the introduction of which the Roman law had prohibited. See *Le Clerc*.

outrage here mentioned was committed, not by the friends of Paul, as our copies might intimate, but by his enemies, who were disappointed in the decree of Gallio, who, though he saw it, did not think proper to notice it.

18.\* We are not well acquainted with the customs of the Jews in making *vows*.† It was, however, a considerable part of their religion, as appears from the book of Psalms, to make vows concerning particular duties, especially on account of particular deliverances; and when these vows were discharged, the custom seems to have been to shave the head, and then perform certain sacrifices in the Temple at Jerusalem. This custom served to preserve a sense of God, and of his providence upon the mind.

*Cenchrea* was a sea-port town in Corinth, on the *Ægean* sea.

21. This was perhaps to discharge his vow.

22. [*Gone up.*] That is, to Jerusalem.‡

23. This third progress of the apostle to preach the gospel probably commenced A. D. 54.

25. He himself had probably been *baptized* by *John*, but it is most probable that he had heard of Christ afterwards, and that he preached his gospel without any particular instruction.

He taught with exactness as far as he knew, which was only what had been taught by John.§

28. By his eloquence *Apollos* seems to have attached many of the *Corinthians* to him in preference to *Paul*, which, however, gave no umbrage to this apostle, who says, [1 *Cor.* iii. 6,] “I have planted, *Apollos* watered, but God gave the increase.”

XIX. We have now finished the account of Paul’s second progress to preach the gospel, in which he visited Greece, and spent about three years, chiefly at Corinth, where a considerable Christian church was formed. Thence he returned by way of Ephesus to Jerusalem. But having discharged his vow, he immediately returned to Antioch, and thence set out on his third progress, A. D. 53, going first through Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the churches which he had established there in his preceeding progress.

1. While *Paul* was engaged in the upper parts of Asia, *Apollos*, the eloquent Jew above-mentioned, driven from

\* See *Lardner*, I. pp. 208—212; *Doddridge*.

† See *Numbers* vi., Vol. XI. pp. 229, 230.

‡ See *Mede*, p. 323; *Gregory*, pp. 20, 21.

§ *Wake* *eld.* (*P.*) See *Le Clerc*; Bishop *Sherlocke* in *Bowyer*; *Doddridge*.



Rome by the persecution of Claudius, *came to Ephesus*, from which place he went to *Corinth*. We shall now attend to the apostle Paul on his return from visiting the churches in Galatia and Phrygia.

2—7. This is a pretty remarkable part of the gospel history, and is attended with some difficulties. The subject of *John's* preaching was, that *men should repent*, on the belief of the speedy approach of one greater than he, who would baptize with *the holy spirit*, as he had done with *water* only. Now as these disciples had not heard of *the holy spirit*,\* it is probable they had not had any regular instruction from John, but only from some of his disciples, who were imperfectly acquainted with his doctrine. Had they been instructed by John himself, and been baptized by him, it is not probable that they would have been baptized again. When our Lord himself began to preach and to baptize, that is, by his disciples, the *preaching* and the *baptism* also, seem to have been the very same with those of John. His doctrine was, *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; and it cannot be supposed, that those who were baptized by our Saviour's own directions, were baptized again by the apostles after the descent of the spirit, or that they were baptized again themselves, who had been baptized only by John. It seems probable that whenever the apostles found any that had been baptized either by John or themselves before our Saviour's death, and who continued in the faith of the gospel, they imparted to them the gift of the holy spirit by the imposition of their hands without any farther baptism.†

I would observe upon this occasion, that as we have no reason to think that John baptized with any such form of words as *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, that form cannot be necessary to proper baptism, nor do the apostles themselves, as I have observed, seem to have thought themselves bound to recite that peculiar form of words, since we have no account of their baptizing in any other form than *in the name of Jesus Christ*.

9. Till this time the Christians had met for public worship in the Jewish synagogue; but from this time they formed a separate assembly of their own. This *Tyrannus* was perhaps an orator, or philosopher.

10. Ephesus was the capital of that district which was

\* "We have not so much as heard whether there be any such powers of prophesying, speaking with tongues, &c. granted to those that believe." *Wall*, in *Lardner*, XI. p. 154. See *ibid.* p. 267; *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 127.

† See *Firmilian* in *Lardner*, II. p. 547.

more properly called *Asia*. This brings the history of Paul, and of the preaching of the gospel, to about A. D. 56.

It was during the stay of Paul at Ephesus, or about A. D. 56, that he wrote his *first epistle to the Corinthians*, in consequence of having been applied to by them to solve some difficulties which had occurred to them; being disturbed by factions among themselves, of which an account will be given when I consider that epistle.

11, 12.\* These *miracles* seem to be more extraordinary than any that we read of, except those performed by our Saviour himself on persons at a distance. They exceed those performed by Peter, [*Ch. v. 15,*] when all those who had laid in his way, so that his *shadow* might fall upon them, were cured. These frequent and illustrious miracles seem to have been necessary at the first promulgation of Christianity, that each disciple might, as it were, have *the witness in himself*, by the communication of some miraculous gift. Had these been only pretended miracles or deceptions, so many of them would not have been attempted, as the hazard of a detection would have been so great, especially in such a city as Ephesus. But as a very considerable Christian church was established there, and continued for ages, we may safely conclude that there was no imposition in the case.

13. We learn from *Josephus*† that many of the Jews pretended a power of casting out *demons* by the invocation of the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or that of Solomon, and in this they used many superstitious magical ceremonies. Perhaps these Jews finding their own methods unsuccessful, and hearing that Paul cast out demons *in the name of Jesus Christ*, thought that his success depended upon the invocation of a more powerful name only, and, therefore, that having the *name* they could do it as well as he.

15. This man, whose disorder was madness, might not have been at all times raving mad, but have had lucid intervals, so that he had heard of persons in his case being relieved by *Paul*, or *Jesus* whom he preached; and not being cured by these people, and his disorder coming upon him with great violence, he behaved in this frantic manner.

17. It appeared from this unsuccessful attempt of these Jews, that madness was not cured by any charm connected with the use of any powerful words, but was done by the power of God, accompanying the preaching of his gospel, to which it was a confirmation.

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

† *Antiq. B. viii. Ch. ii. Sect. v.*



19. Probably fifty thousand *cistophori*, a small piece of silver coin, about half the weight of a Roman *denarius*, by which it appears from *Cicero*, that sums of money were computed in Asia; so that the whole sum would amount to about eight hundred pounds sterling.

Magical arts constituted a great part of the absurd superstition of the ancient idolatry; and the minds of men were kept in a state of shameful bondage by these delusions.\* It was true religion, and not philosophy, that emancipated the minds of men from this miserable servitude. By this we are convinced of the absurdity of all attempts to pry into futurity, or to controul the course of nature, which God alone can command, and which he changes, not in consequence of the will or the arts of men, but at his sovereign pleasure, and for the greatest and most valuable purposes. The more we know of the foolish, but often horrid ceremonies to which the ancients had recourse, for the purpose of prying into futurity, or gaining any particular purpose, the more thankful we shall be for the light of the gospel.

It were to be wished that all similar superstitions were banished from the Christian world. We have many remains of these things still among us; but true religion and good sense together will, no doubt, put an end to them at last. It is no inconsiderable evidence of the divinity of the Jewish religion, that while all other nations were entirely devoted to magical rites, divination and necromancy, the Jews were taught to hold all these things in deserved abhorrence and contempt. How came that stupid people, as unbelievers generally represent them, to be so much more enlightened than their neighbours, whose superior wisdom was so much boasted of? How came they to be wiser than the Greeks and the Egyptians?

22. That is, the proper or proconsular *Asia*, of which Ephesus was the capital.

23. That is, about Christianity, which Paul preached, and which gave great offence to the Jews.

24. At Ephesus there was a most magnificent temple of the goddess *Diana*, which was originally *the moon*. The temple was built at the common expense of all the cities in Asia, and was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It had been burnt down twice before this time, but had always been rebuilt with as much expense and splendour as before,

\* On the magical character called *the Ephesian letters*, see *Le Clerc* and *Doddridge*.

so that it was as large as the most admired structure of its kind in the whole Heathen world, and by far the most magnificent, so as to come the nearest to the temple at Jerusalem.

These *shrines*\* were probably small models of the temple, and of the image of Diana which it contained, made of metal, and sold to strangers, who visited Ephesus, and came to worship there.

26. It was a maxim with the Heathens, that after an image had been *consecrated*, which was done with much ceremony, the spirit, or the invisible power of the god whom it represented was brought to reside in it, so that it was itself a proper object of worship. These ceremonies were first devised by those who worshipped the heavenly bodies, for the use of the worshippers when they were below the horizon, and therefore invisible to them, and were afterwards extended to dead men, who were of course wholly absent from them; and the images were at first mere pillars of stone, before they had the form of men.

27. We see here what we may see every day, how ready men are to make use of religion, good or bad, true or false, as a cover for their own private views. The real object of Demetrius was to secure his gain, but the pretence was a zeal for his religion, which alone would interest others, and induce them to join with him.

The reason why not only Demetrius, but the Heathens in general, took so much umbrage at the progress of Christianity, was, that it was a religion utterly hostile to every species of Heathenism; whereas the different kinds of Heathenism were tolerant with respect to each other; it being a generally-received opinion, that the particular religion of each country and people was proper for that country and people, and therefore, although they were different, they did not interfere with each other. But Christianity was an utter enemy to them all, and aimed at their extirpation, which at length it effected, when reason and philosophy had failed. Thus was verified what our Saviour declared, that *no man comes to the Father*, or to the knowledge and worship of the

\* "Not for, but of Diana.—At this time there was a solemn confluence of all the Lesser Asians, to the Holy Games, celebrated at Ephesus, to the honour of other gods, but to Diana, in chief. And it must have been very much out of the craftsmen's way, if it could have been perswaded (as Paul endeavoured to do) that these enshrined idolillos of Diana, so much bought up by the devout people, were no gods, because they were made with hands." Gregory, pp. 53, 54. See Le Clerc; Doddridge.



true God, but *by him*, and also what Paul says, that *the world by wisdom knew not God*.

29. This was a large building, open to the air, in which probably causes were tried.

31. They were probably the magistrates, or *chief* priests, who presided over the games in honour of the goddess, who thought well of Paul, and wished to screen him from danger.\*

32. This is often the case in popular tumults, the course of some drawing in others, before they know the reason of it.

33. [*Putting him forward.*] This they did perhaps with a view to his pleading the common cause against the worship of images, † but perhaps willing to put him to some danger of his life for having deserted *them*.

34. [*A Jew.*] And therefore a professed enemy to their religion.

37. It is probable that here, as well as at Athens, Paul had been cautious to say nothing that would unnecessarily give offence to the people, or their religion, ‡ though he abstained from all criminal compliance with it, or countenance of it. We are not to seek, but to avoid persecution, as far as conscience is not concerned.

38. That is, if he can prove that the Christians have done them any real injury.

39. [*Inquire.*] That is, in relation to religion in general, and any insults offered to it. *A proper assembly*, he says, should be convened for the purpose, and proper notice given of it.

40. That is, to the Romans, who were very attentive to popular commotions, which might give disturbance to the government.

XX. 1. In the preceding chapter we had an account of the transactions of Paul at Ephesus, in his third apostolical progress. In this city, the metropolis of Proconsular Asia, he continued near three years, till A. D. 56, teaching in the school of one *Tyrannus*, till the number of proselytes he made, alarmed those whose interest it more immediately was to support the worship of Diana, who had a most magnificent temple there. This occasioned a great tumult, which

\* It has been conjectured "that the people were then celebrating the public games, over which these officers presided." See *Doddridge*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Grotius* in *Doddridge*.

‡ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge* on *Orobis* and *Shaftsbury*.

alarmed the magistrates, and being the friends of Paul, or perceiving that the proceedings against him and his friends were violent and irregular, and apprehending that some umbrage would be given to the Romans, they interposed to stop the proceedings. It seems, however, that, upon this event, Paul saw reason to quit the place, and proceeded to preach the gospel elsewhere.

2. It appears from comparing different parts of Paul's epistles, that while he was at Ephesus he had sent Titus to Corinth, with his first epistle to the Christians of that city, and that he was very anxious to hear the effects of it, which he did not till after he arrived in *Macedonia*. But then it gave him great satisfaction, as his epistle had been the means of allaying the disturbances which had arisen in that place. He had also left Timothy behind him at Ephesus on account of the unsettled state of the church there, by reason of Alexander, and other Jewish converts, introducing from the philosophy of those times principles utterly subversive of the gospel. These men pretended to great knowledge of nature and celestial things, and despised the simplicity of the apostles. But, believing the general facts upon which the truth of Christianity was founded, they made a mixed kind of system, partaking of both, the particulars of which I shall have occasion to speak of when I treat of the epistles. This is the first time that we have any distinct account of this philosophical Christianity.

Paul, being arrived in *Macedonia*, wrote his *First Epistle to Timothy*,\* who was then at Ephesus, and it chiefly respected the state of things in that place, where those principles above-mentioned, commonly called *the Gnostic heresy*, appear to have gained much ground.

In this journey of Paul to *Macedonia* he appears to have preached the gospel also in *Illyricum*, which bordered upon *Macedonia* to the west, and about this time also he appears to have been in *Crete*, but when, or upon what occasion, he made this voyage, we are not told. From *Macedonia* also, Paul wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians, expressing his satisfaction in the effect of his first,† and presently after he proceeded to that place.

3. It was during this *abode* of Paul at Corinth that he wrote the epistle to the Romans.‡ The *lying in wait* here spoken of, may possibly refer to some attempts of the unbe-

\* See 1 *Tim.* iii. 14, 15; iv. 13. † See 2 *Cor.* vii. 5—7. ‡ See *Doddridge*.



lieving Jews to seize the money which he had been collecting in Greece for the poor Christians at Jerusalem.

4. It is thought by some that these persons attended him with the contributions from their several churches, and *Timothy*, one of these, might bring those from Ephesus.\*

5. Here *Luke* again speaks of himself. Perhaps he had been left at Philippi, and now joined Paul when he arrived there again.

6. This passover was in A. D. 58. *Troas* was a sea-port town in Asia, opposite to Greece.†

7. Here it appears to have been the custom of the Christians to meet for public worship on *the first day of the week*, called *the Lord's day*, though we have no precept on record for the purpose; and also, that it was their custom *to break bread*, that is, to administer the Lord's Supper every Lord's day, and this appears from other accounts of early times.‡ The abuses which have arisen in this institution have been very extraordinary indeed; but it is very easy to distinguish what it was intended to be; and no abuse of it will authorize us to neglect the proper use of it, a neglect which is too common with us. It is the proper external badge of our profession as Christians, as the observance of the Passover and other peculiar rites were the badges of Judaism; and if we profess Christianity at all, we ought not either to be ashamed or afraid of wearing the external signs of it.

9. The ancients had only openings in the walls of their houses for windows, without any glass in them, and in general they had shutters to keep out the rain, or the wind, when they were incommoded by them, though oiled paper was also pretty common. In one of these windows, in the highest part of the room, this young man was sitting, the place being probably much crowded. Or Paul might be preaching in the court which was surrounded by the buildings of the house, and *Eutychus* might have placed himself in one of the windows of the upper rooms, which were openings even with the floor, generally guarded with lattice work, which might give way as he leaned against it.§

10. It is possible that *Paul* stretched himself upon the body of this young man, as *Elijah* did upon that of the child, which he raised from the dead.|| Or it is possible that,

\* See *Doddridge*.

† See *supra*, p. 454.

‡ See *Chap. ii. 46*; *Wotton*, I. p. 296; *Doddridge*.

§ See *Doddridge*; *Harmer*, I. p. 164, *Note*.

|| See *1 Kings xvii. 21*; *Doddridge*.

though he was supposed to be dead, he might not have been so in reality; nothing that is here said properly implying that a miracle was wrought in his recovery, except the circumstance of Paul's delivering him alive to his friends,\* which would otherwise hardly have been mentioned.

11. Paul probably continued his discourse to this great length, apprehending, as we find he did with respect to the elders of Ephesus, that he should see them no more.†

We see upon this, and all other occasions, the great earnestness and affectionate disposition of Paul; how much he had the cause of Christianity, and the good of mankind at heart. It was evidently no part that he was acting for his own purpose; and, considering his education, his early principles and habits, and his good sense, let unbelievers account for his conduct if they can. The truth is, that in general, they adopt their principles upon a random, hasty view of things, without due consideration.

16, 17. We now find Paul upon his return from his third apostolical progress, on which he had spent near three years at *Ephesus*, and after that two more in Macedonia and Greece. Returning thence, in order to be at Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost, A. D. 58, he had not time to call at Ephesus; but from *Miletus*, a sea-port of *Asia Minor*, south of *Ephesus*, he sent for the elders of that church, in order to take his leave of them, and give them his last instructions, apprehending that he should have no other opportunity of doing it.

18. In this address to them we see marks of a perfect consciousness of the upright and disinterested discharge of his duty in preaching the gospel, and the earnest desire he had for the welfare of all those to whom he had devoted his services. Such passages as these can never be read and attended to, without removing all idea of the apostles having had any interest of their own to serve by preaching the gospel. If they deceived others, they first of all deceived themselves; and how so many persons, men of so much good sense in other respects, and whose property, ease, reputation and lives, were as dear to them as the same things are to other men, came to be deceived, it will not be easy to imagine.

19. Till some time after this period, all the opposition that the gospel met with was from *the Jews*, the Romans

\* It is only said, ver. 12, "they brought the young man alive." See 1 *Kings* xvii. 23.

† See *Doddridge*.



having taken no part in it, but generally considering Christianity as a new sect among the Jews, whom they had already tolerated in all parts of the empire, and allowed to follow their own peculiar customs. This was a great advantage to Christianity in its infant state, and the Romans would also be sensible that Christianity, being persecuted by the Jews, was no scheme of theirs as a nation; and therefore, that if Christ was an impostor, he had no advantage whatever in the scene that he had chosen for it, the government of the country having been so extremely hostile to him; and this is a valuable argument for the truth of Christianity at this day. It had no countenance from worldly power or policy, and therefore could not have gained ground as it did, if it had not been supported with the power of truth.

20, 21. It is plain from this, that Paul had at this time communicated to the church at Ephesus the whole scheme of the gospel, all that he knew concerning it, without concealing any thing; and here we see the sum and substance of the whole is comprehended in *repentance from sin*,\* and in *faith in Christ*, by which was meant the belief that Jesus was a true prophet, who would come again to raise the dead and judge the world. We have seen likewise, in the whole history of Paul's travels, that all the opposition the Jews made to him, was on account of his preaching that Jesus was the *Messiah*. Now, had he preached that, besides being the Messiah, he was likewise God, or the Maker of the world under God, it is impossible but that there would have been some mention of it in this history. If an objection to a doctrine of so extraordinary a nature as this had arisen from no other quarter, it certainly would from the Jews, who would, no doubt, have been much more offended at it than at the doctrine of any particular man being the Messiah. And this objection they were ready enough to make to Christianity, as soon as the idea began to be entertained by Christians, and it is to this day the principal objection they make to it. But this did not take place till long after the age of the apostles.

22. That is, I have an impulse from *the spirit* of God to go to *Jerusalem*.†

24. Whence could this magnanimity arise but from a firm persuasion of the unspeakable value of the gospel, and

\* *Repentance towards God*. "Un changement d'esprit qui les ramène à Dieu."  
Le Clerc.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Bowyer*.

a consciousness of his disinterested labours in preaching it? The gospel is the same that ever it was, and as deserving of our attachment.

27. Happy are those ministers who can make the same declaration.

28. In the best manuscripts it is *the church of the Lord*,\* that is, of Christ; and the Syriac version has, *the church of Christ*.† God is often said, in a figurative way, to redeem or purchase us to himself by the death of his Son; having sent his Son to recover men from a state of sin and wickedness; and Christ is also said to have redeemed us from all iniquity, and to wash us from our sins in his blood, because he gave up his life in this undertaking. But that God can give *his blood*, which our translation implies, is impossible; so that we cannot but conclude that there must have been some mistake or other, even if there had been no manuscript or ancient version, in favour of any other reading. But the best manuscripts, and the oldest versions, have a different expression, and therefore our translation ought to have been different from what it is.

By *his own blood*, Mr. Wakefield understands *his own Son*.‡

The Alexandrian MS. has, *which he redeemed with blood*.

We are no where said to be bought or redeemed from the wrath of God, but only from the power of sin, by God. He is always ready to receive the penitent sinner, without any other atonement or satisfaction made to his justice, and we are required to forgive others as God forgives us, that is, *freely*, upon the repentance only of an offending brother, without requiring any other satisfaction than his repentance. "If he repent," says our Saviour, [*Luke xvii. 3, 4,*] "thou shalt forgive him."

The word that is here rendered *overseer*, is the same that is elsewhere rendered *bishop*, which shews that at this time, as there were several of them, there was no one person to whom the care or government of a Christian church was committed, but that, like the Jewish synagogues, the business of them was conducted by a number of persons, called *elders*, as these overseers, or bishops, of the church of Ephesus are here called. Afterwards, one of these elders had first a nominal, and then a real pre-eminence over the rest; in consequence, he alone had the title of bishop, while

\* See *Com. and Ess.* I. p. 425; II. p. 274, *Note*; *Impr. Vers.*

† "*Kypis, du Seigneur, qui signifie ordinairement Jesus Christ.*" *Le Clerc.*

‡ See his *Note* on the passage, and *Henley in Appen. to Bowyer.*



the rest retained that of elders only. This change from the primitive custom went on till the bishops of particular churches, or congregations, became what are called diocesan bishops, having an extensive authority, both spiritual and temporal, over other churches, and one of them, viz. the bishop of Rome, obtained dominion over the whole Christian world.

29. In this he alludes to the heresy of the *Gnostics*, which appeared pretty early at *Ephesus*, as it is evident from Paul's *first Epistle to Timothy*, who resided there, written a little before this interview with the elders of this church. They taught, among other things, that the world was not made by God, but by some inferior being, and that the Christian resurrection was only a figurative thing, and not real, which was subversive of the proper hope of the gospel; but I shall have a better opportunity of explaining these things hereafter.

34. This Paul now did at Corinth, and possibly at several other places, to convince his disciples that he sought nothing but their advantage.\*

35. How contrary is this to the doctrine of the Monks in popish countries, who devote themselves to what they call *contemplation and prayer*, that is, in many cases, to idleness, and the vices which always attend idleness!

This is a valuable saying of our Lord's, exactly similar to others of his in the gospels, but not found in any of the four.†

38. We see here the intense affection which these Christians had for their spiritual pastor, who indeed deserved it so well of them. It is happy when disinterested services are so well rewarded. But this is not their proper reward, or the immediate object of preachers of the gospel. They are to do their duty in the first place, in preaching what Paul here calls *the whole counsel of God*, in whatever manner their services may be received by men, looking for their proper reward hereafter, in the *well done, good and faithful servants* of their common Lord.

XXI. 1. Paul is now on his return from his third apostolic progress, and having taken leave of the elders of Ephesus, whom he had desired to meet him at Miletus, is now hastening to be at Jerusalem, at the approaching feast

\* "Compare 1 Cor. iv. 12, 1 Thess. ii. 9, 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9." Doddridge.

† "Tillotson, Ablancourt, Grotius, and other writers, have quoted passages from *Plutarch*, *Seneca*, and others of the ancients, bearing some resemblance to it." Doddridge.

of Pentecost, which was A. D. 58. Thither he was carrying a considerable collection of money, which had been contributed by the Gentile Christians in Greece for the relief of the poor Christians at Jerusalem.

4. That is, it was at his peril, or he would suffer in consequence of it. It could not be an absolute order from *the holy spirit*, that he should not go, for he himself had said that he was pressed in the spirit to go, which implies that he went in consequence of a motion of the holy spirit for that purpose.\*

7.† This was a considerable city on the coast of *Phœnicia*, and it was so called by one of the *Ptolemies* of Egypt, who had the possession of it, and who had fortified and ornamented it.‡

8. *Philip* was *one of the seven* extraordinary officers, appointed by the apostles to act under them, both in temporal and spiritual affairs. Stephen, the first martyr, had been one of them, and this Philip was the next in order. He had preached the gospel to the Samaritans, then to the eunuch of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, after which we have an account of his proceeding to Cæsarea,§ where he probably settled, and where Paul now finds him.

10. This is the *Agabus* who had foretold the approaching famine in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, of which we had an account before. (*Chap. xi. 28.*)

11. Not that he would be *bound* in that particular manner, but that he would be as certainly bound, and be kept in custody, which was actually the case.

13. He knew it was the will of God that he should go thither at that time, and his own personal safety was only a secondary object with him. If we be Christians, we also should make our own advantage, ease, pleasure, or safety, a secondary object, and a faithful discharge of our duty the first, whatever difficulty or hazardous services it should call us to.

16. This was probably one of the disciples of our Lord himself, before the ministry of the apostles.

17. Both on account of the safe return of such laborious and successful preachers of the gospel, and also on account of the collection which they brought from the Gentile

\* See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

† “Perhaps read *διαναεσσαντες*. Having sailed from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais.” *Hammond* in *Bowyer*.

‡ It is now called *Acca* or *Acra*. See *Maundrell*, p. 53; *Doddridge*.

§ See *supra*, p. 422.



Christians, which was peculiarly acceptable to the poor Christians at *Jerusalem*.

18. It is probable that *James*, called the brother of our Lord, and the author of the epistle which bears his name, was the only apostle who was now at Jerusalem. As Peter addresses his epistles to the Jewish Christians in Asia, Pontus and Bythinia, it is probable that he might at this time be in these parts.

20. It is not to be wondered at, that the Jewish Christians always continued attached to their *law*, which they knew to be of divine origin, and which our Lord said he came not to destroy, but to fulfil, which did not necessarily imply that after it was fulfilled it was to be abolished, as of no farther use. Besides, there are many parts of the Jewish law which could not, except by a very harsh construction, be said to be fulfilled by Christ at all, especially the rites of circumcision and sacrifice; for, if we consider the origin and use of them, we shall not find that they had reference to Christ or Christianity. Christ was circumcised as other Jews were, but there is not the least intimation that this rite was to end with him. The apostles had certainly no such idea, for they directed the practice of it afterwards, and it is only in a figurative sense that the death of Christ is ever called a sacrifice. It was no proper antitype of the sacrifices under the law; or should any apostle have imagined that this had been the case, and thence have concluded that the business of sacrificing ought to be discontinued, (though there is no intimation of any such thing in the New Testament,) this would be no proper authority for their discontinuance. An express revelation would have been necessary for the abrogation of whatever had been appointed by revelation. It is remarkable that, in the prophecies of *Ezekiel*,\* which certainly refer to the time of the final restoration of the Jews to their own country, mention is made both of a temple and of sacrifices.

21. This was a false charge, for it does not appear that Paul himself had ever neglected any part of the Jewish ritual, or taught other Jews to neglect it,† but that he had only strenuously insisted that the Gentile converts were not bound to these observances. He had indeed eaten in company with Gentiles, as Peter had done; but it does not follow that he had eaten any thing of which it was

\* See Vol. XII. pp. 451, 452.

† See *Lardner*, XI. pp. 348, 349; *Doddridge* on Toland's *Nazarenus*.

unlawful for a Jew to eat. He had only broken through a restraint which *tradition*, and not *the law of Moses*, had enjoined.

24. It appears to have been considered as an act of piety to assist *Nazarites*, or persons who had vows upon them, and who, in consequence of it, were obliged to be at considerable expense at the expiration of their vows, their friends assisting them in defraying that expense, and joining in their devotions. This act of piety and charity Paul took upon himself, in order to shew his attachment to the law.\*

25. In this the Christians at Jerusalem expressed their entire concurrence in all that Paul had done.

26. The offering for each *Nazarite* was two lambs and one ram, besides flour and oil, which was a considerable expense.

27. *Seven days* were to complete this business. It was at the very beginning of these seven days, and long before the end of them, that this tumult happened.†

28. This was altogether a false charge. Paul had not taught any thing either *against the Law*, or *the Temple*, except what all Christians might be said to have done, and he had brought no Greeks into the Temple.‡

30. This was with an intention, no doubt, to beat or stone him to death, which, in their ungoverned zeal and rage, they were ready to do, without any process or form of law.§

31. This was the Roman officer whose station was in the castle of *Antonia*, near the Temple,|| in order to prevent tumults, to which the Jews were very liable.

33. That is, he had two soldiers to guard him, each being fastened with a *chain* to one of his hands.

38. This was one of the impostors, who, according to our Saviour's predictions, preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. This *Egyptian*, (that is, a Jew of Egypt,) whose name is not come down to us, called himself a prophet; and having collected a number of followers, brought them to the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, promising them that the walls would fall down before them; but *Felix*, the Roman governor, marching against him, the Egyptian

\* See *Lardner*, I. pp. 211, 212; XI. pp. 349—353; *Doddridge*.

† See *Doddridge*.

‡ See *ibid*.

§ "Philo says, that any *uncircumcised* person, who came within the separating wall, might be stoned to death, without any further process." *Ibid*.

|| See *Lardner*, I. pp. 104, 105; *Doddridge*.



was defeated, and his followers either slain or dispersed, but himself escaped.\* The people having been deceived by him, it is no wonder that he was unpopular, and that *Lysias* suspected Paul might be the same person.

39. The people of *Tarsus* boasted of their antiquity.† The city derived its name, as some suppose, from *Tarshish*, the son of Javan. They were no less distinguished by their application to learning, than by their wealth.

XXII.‡ 1. Paul being now arrived at Jerusalem from his third apostolical progress, and being narrowly watched, as he always was, by his enemies the unbelieving Jews, was apprehended by them in the Temple, on suspicion of his having brought Gentiles into it; and a violent clamour being immediately raised, and he being accused to the populace of having preached every where against the religion of his country, was upon the point of being stoned to death, or of being torn to pieces, when he was rescued from their violence by *Lysias*, the Roman officer who had the command of the guard near the Temple. Paul, wishing to give the people who were assembled on this occasion, some satisfaction with respect to his conduct, obtained leave of the officer to speak to them, which he did as follows.

2. This circumstance would satisfy the multitude that he was a Jew, their countryman, and dispose them to give him the more attention.

3. *Gamaliel* has been mentioned before [*Chap. v. 34*], as a person in the highest credit with the Pharisaical Jews. A disciple of his could not be supposed to want either a knowledge of their religion, or a zeal for it.

5. *The high-priest*, and many of the *elders* of the Jews, under whom Paul had acted, were probably then living, and could bear witness to the truth of this part of his narrative, and this being found true, would give the more credit to the remainder. His zeal for his religion, and his rage against Christianity, being so well known, it would be evident that nothing but some very remarkable event, some very overbearing evidence of the truth of Christianity, could supply a sufficient motive for such a change of his conduct. It would therefore prepare them for the hearing of what follows.

9. They *heard*, as may be collected from another account

\* See *Jos. Antiq. B. xx. Ch. viii. Sect. vi.*; *War, B. ii. Ch. xiii. Sect. v.*; *Lardner, l. pp. 417—419*; *Doddridge*.

† See *ibid.*

‡ "An address to two ranks of people: not, as the English version, to three." See *ver. 14 (Greek).*" *Bowyer*.

of the same transaction [*Chap.* ix. 7], a confused sound of a person speaking, but could not distinguish the words, or the purport of what was said.

16. This may probably be interpreted, agreeably to other similar expressions, *taking upon him the Christian profession*; for *calling upon this name* seems to have been equivalent to *being called by this name*. A similar expression occurs in *Genesis* iv. 26: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," or *to be called by the name of the Lord*, distinguishing themselves as his worshippers, in opposition to those who probably about that time began to worship other gods.

17. This vision was probably after his return from Antioch, and immediately before his mission to the idolatrous Gentiles; for it is not probable that the first intimation of the calling of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of Christianity was made to Paul, previous to Peter's being so particularly illuminated with respect to it.\*

19.† By this he intimated that he was exceedingly desirous of continuing at *Jerusalem*, for the benefit of his countrymen, which he might think would recommend him to his audience. He urged these circumstances of himself, and his zeal for the law being so well known, as what would give peculiar weight to his testimony in favour of Christianity.

21. Our Saviour knew that the aversion which the unbelieving Jews would have for him as an apostate would be so great, that their disappointment in him would weigh more against him, than the history of his conversion would for him.

22. We see upon this and upon many other occasions, how highly the Jews thought of the privileges of their nation. They were zealous to make converts, and considered all men as outcasts of God who were not circumcised, and did not conform to their law, and it is plain they understood Paul as speaking here of his preaching the gospel to Gentiles, without the obligation of circumcision and a conformity to the law. His preaching upon any other plan was no new thing to them, and could not have given so much offence. Preaching to the uncircumcised Gentiles, we have seen, gave the greatest offence to the Jews at a distance, and much more to those at Jerusalem.

23. They *threw dust into the air*, to express their rage and

\* See Doddridge.

† *Le Clerc* by *synagogues* understands here civil assemblies, *des assemblées politiques*. Yet see Doddridge.



abhorrence of him,\* and they put off their clothes in order to be ready to stone him.

24. That is, be put to the torture, in order to make him confess what he had been guilty of.† This was done by the Romans by tying a person to a pillar, and scourging him with thongs, nearly in the same manner as soldiers are whipped with us, which is a cruel mode of punishment.

25. By the Roman laws no citizen of Rome could either be scourged or put to death.‡ He could only be banished.

28. The privileges of a Roman citizen were of great value, and it is known that in the time of Claudius, who preceded Nero, who was now emperor, it was sometimes purchased at a great price. It is most probable that Paul's father had either purchased his freedom, or obtained it as a reward for services done the state, so that his children were *born free*.§

30. This Roman governor, who appears to have acted with great spirit and propriety in the whole affair, finding that the Jews had nothing to charge him with of a proper civil nature, of which alone he had cognizance, but that it was something relating to their peculiar laws and customs, ordered an assembly of the *Sanhedrim*, or the great council of the nation, to examine into it, he being ready to execute their sentence if he had approved of it.

XXIII. We have seen how Paul was rescued from the violence of the mob at the Temple, by Lysias the Roman officer, the vindication that he made of himself in his speech to them, and the rage which they expressed when he came to speak of his mission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. We have also seen how he was going to be put to the torture, probably in order to make him confess his crime and his accomplices, and how he saved himself by pleading the privileges of a Roman citizen. He continued, however, in the custody of two Roman soldiers, who, according to the custom of those times, were chained one to each of his hands.

1. This [*earnestly beholding*] was probably in order to observe whether he knew any of them, as he had formerly (viz. A. D. 33—35) been personally known to all the rulers of the Jews; having at that time entered into all their measures, and acted under their authority.

By comparing the accounts which Paul gives of his con-

\* See Chardin MS. (on Job ii. 12), in Harmer, II. p. 109.

† See Lardner, I. pp. 221, 222.

‡ See *ibid.* pp. 222, 223.

§ See *ibid.* pp. 224—229; Doddridge.

duct in different parts of his writings, we find that by this expression [*all good conscience*] he did not mean to acquit himself wholly in the sight of God; for though he had acted according to his conscience while he persecuted the Christians, it was an erroneous and ill-informed conscience, and that he ought to have taken more pains to inform himself better.\*

2. This *Ananias* was a Sadducee, and had been sent prisoner to Rome to give an account of his conduct before Claudius Cæsar, in the quarrel between the Jews and the Samaritans; and it is thought that he was acquitted at the intercession of Agrippa the younger.† There appears to have been no sufficient reason for this order to *smite* Paul, except he might think it was a secret reproach to himself, and a reflection upon his judges and the court. There is nothing arrogant or improper in any person accused of a crime to profess his innocence.

3. This it is probable Paul spake from a prophetic impulse, as this man was actually killed in the siege at Jerusalem;‡ but considering the gross insult and indecency of his conduct as a judge, there was very little to be condemned in the apostle's conduct. Any man of spirit, and of a warm temper, would naturally have done the same thing.

5. That is, irritated as he was by the insult that had been offered him, he did not *consider* that it was *the high-priest*;§ for it is hardly possible but that, strictly speaking, he must have known who it was that presided in a court, with the forms of which he was so well acquainted. This ready and respectful quoting of the Scriptures would tend to procure him a more favourable hearing.

6. This was certainly a piece of address in the apostle; but I cannot think it to have been perfectly fair, because the resurrection for which he contended, viz. that of Christ, was no more believed by the Pharisees than the Sadducees.|| The resurrection of Christ is indeed the most satisfactory evidence of a general resurrection, and we Christians must say that if Christ be not raised, our hope of a resurrection is vain. But the Pharisees believed the doctrine in general on other grounds. However, the Pharisees would have less

\* See *Doddridge*.

† See *ibid*.

‡ See *Jos. Antig. B. xx. Ch. ix. Sect. ii.*; *War, B. ii. Ch. xvii. Sect. ii. vi. ix.*; *Doddridge*.

§ See *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

|| See *Le Clerc*; and *Orobio* examined by *Doddridge*.



difficulty in admitting the resurrection of Christ, as they expected a general resurrection.

7. That is, of the audience, who would interest themselves in what was passing.

8. *The Sadducees* allowed the existence of no intelligent being, besides God and men. *Spirits* do not in this place mean spirits, or souls of men; for it is afterwards supposed that a spirit might have spoken to Paul; so that they must have meant some invisible being, the messenger of God to men, a kind of apparition, or something at least similar to an angel. And we are led to this interpretation by all the articles being comprehended under two; it being said that the Pharisees confessed *both*, that is, both the resurrection and the doctrine of angels, or spirits.

9. We may judge of the violence with which things were conducted at this time, agreeably to the accounts of *Josephus*, by the disorderly proceeding of this assembly, the most respectable in the country.

11. That is, the Lord Jesus.

13. At this time, according to the account of *Josephus*,\* the whole country was infested with a desperate set of people called *Zealots*, and likewise *Sicarii*, who, out of a zeal for the law of Moses, made no scruple of murdering any persons who were obnoxious to them. They carried short daggers under their cloaks, and in this manner dispatched great numbers, by mixing in crowds, especially at the public festivals, and even in the Temple. They were often employed by persons of high rank to rid themselves of their particular enemies. We shall see that this design upon the life of Paul was approved by the members of the *Sanhedrim*, who had no other method of having their revenge upon him.

16. *Paul's* original connexions having been with the leading men of his country, and his relations probably not being all converted to Christianity, retained the same connexions, which they now employed to serve him.

17—21. Though Paul was assured by our Saviour that he was to appear at Rome, and therefore this plot against his life could not take place at Jerusalem, yet he did not neglect the natural means of preserving his life; for God works by natural causes.

22. The Roman officer, it will appear, acted with great prudence and propriety in disappointing the wicked designs of these Jews.

\* *War*, B. vii. Ch. x. Sect. i. xi.

XXIV. We have seen Paul rescued from the violence of the Jews by the commanding officer at the Temple, and safely conveyed from Jerusalem to *Cæsarea*, where Felix, the Roman governor, resided, that he might be examined by him in the presence of his accusers. At this time the Jews had no power of criminal jurisdiction, so as to pass sentence of death, and it was nothing less than this that the enemies of Paul intended at this time.

1. We see of what importance the Jews imagined this cause to be, by *the high-priest* himself in person attending the Roman governor as the accuser of Paul. He might attend, indeed, in order to give evidence with respect to what had passed when he was examined before him; but, as a witness, any other person present would have been sufficient.

2, 3. This oration of *Tertullus*, probably a pleader by profession,\* after a complimentary introduction, contains three charges against Paul; the first, that he was a seditious person; the second, that he was a sectary; and the third, that he had profaned the Temple. To each of these charges Paul replies.

The *quietness* here spoken of refers to Felix having cleared the country of the bands of robbers with which it was infested. But the change was not in fact for the better; for these *banditti*, being driven from their haunts in the mountains, infested the cities, and especially Jerusalem; and using a pretext of *religion*, affected a great zeal for the law, and the privileges of the Jews as a free nation, held in unlawful subjection by the Romans, they committed the greatest outrages, not sparing any persons who were obnoxious to them. Felix himself was guilty of so much oppression, that the Jews, who accused him before the emperor, would have procured his banishment, if he had not been saved by his brother Pallas. Among other enormities, he procured the high-priest Jonathan, who had been his particular friend, to be assassinated. *Tacitus* says of this Felix, that he practised all cruelty and lust in his government, thinking that he might do all wickedness without punishment.

5. The charge of faction and *sedition* has never failed to be alleged against all who endeavour to make men wiser

\* "Un Romain, qui faisoit profession de plaider devant les gouverneurs de Judée, pour ceux de la province, qui ne savoient pas parler Latin." *Le Clerc*. "Almost every word of this oration is *false*; the accusation of *Paul*, the encomium of the government of *Felix*, and the declaration of a *lawful intention* in what they had done and attempted." *Doddridge*.



than their ancestors. Every *innovation*, as such, is apt to give alarm to persons whose wish and interest it is to keep all things in the same quiet state in which they found them, dreading the effect of all changes, as not knowing how far they may proceed. But this is an inconvenience that must always be risked for the sake of truth. In fact, all the evil and disturbance has been occasioned by those who have opposed innovation.

Paul was accused as one of those who turned the world upside down, so were *Luther, Calvin* and *Socinus*. But these simply endeavoured to enlighten the minds of men, which would have been followed by no disturbance at all, if their enemies had not had recourse to violence in order to suppress them. They have been the *persecutors*, and not the *persecuted*, who have turned the world upside down, and have occasioned all the mischiefs that have been complained of.

The Jewish Christians were always called *Nazarenes* by the other Jews in their own country, and these, who were original believers in Jesus, were always afterwards distinguished by their zeal for the law, in conjunction with their belief of Christianity, and likewise by their holding that Christ was simply a man. No instance can be produced of any *Nazarenes*, or Jewish Christians, holding any other doctrine, which they certainly would have done, if it had been taught by the apostles.

6. He conceals the circumstance of their intending to kill Paul without any process of law, before Lysias rescued him.

9. The orator having completed his accusation, it was *assented* to by the Jews who were present. But it will appear that they were far from being able to produce any proper evidence for any part of it.

10. This was A. D. 58, when *Felix* had been governor of Judea six or seven years.

11. There was, therefore, no *time* for him to have made any alarming sedition, which would have required accomplices, and leisure to consult their measures.

13. To this general charge, Paul alleges facts well known to his enemies themselves, and which amount to a full justification of his conduct; and he challenges them to prove any of the things which they laid to his charge. But it appears that they were not provided for any thing of the kind.

14, 15. To the charge of his being a Nazarene, he pleads

guilty, but asserts that this was nothing contrary to the law of the Jews, which the Romans would have respected. He was a worshipper of the same God with the other Jews, and held the same great doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead*.

16.\* He not only held the true faith, but endeavoured to conform his life to it.

17. So far was he from being an enemy to the Jews, or to their religion, that he had come to Jerusalem with the best intentions respecting both.

21. Of this he knew that none of the *Pharisees* would complain, and the *Sadducees* would not have been regarded.

22.† As *Felix* perceived that the Jews could not support their charges of sedition and profanation of the Temple, and nothing remained of the accusation but that of Paul being a Christian, of which he had but little knowledge, he required more time to inquire into its nature and tendency, and also to inform himself more particularly concerning the conduct of Paul, as far as the Roman officer had been witness to it.

23. Thus far this unjust governor, having no interest to mislead him, acted uprightly; *Paul* having every liberty that was consistent with his being a prisoner, amenable to justice.

24. This *Drusilla* was the daughter of *Herod Agrippa*, and sister of the younger *Agrippa*, of whom we shall have an account hereafter. She had been married to *Azizus*, king of *Emisa*, who had been circumcised, and embraced the Jewish religion as the condition of that marriage. Being remarkably beautiful, *Felix* had seduced her from her husband, and engaged her to marry him.‡

25. *Paul*, no doubt, gave a particular account of the principles and the evidences of Christianity, as well as this great object of it, viz. the reformation of men's lives with a view to a future judgment; but it was these parts of *Paul's* discourse which the guilt of *Felix* could not fail to apply to himself, that he was particularly affected with.

We have no account of the effect of this discourse on *Drusilla*, though out of curiosity she was present. The doctrine which alarmed *Felix* was not new to her; and,

\* *Herein*; rather for this cause. See *Mede*, p. 871; *Grotius* in *Doddridge*.

† "Felix postponed them, saying, after more fully informing myself concerning this way," &c. *Pyle* in *Bowyer*. So *N. T. Mons*, 1710. See *Doddridge*.

‡ See *Jos. Antig. B. xx. Ch. vii. Sect. i. ii.*; *Lardner*, l. pp. 25—27; *Doddridge*.



being a Jewess, she might flatter herself with a hope of escaping the judgments of God, as being a daughter of Abraham, a circumstance on which the Jews of that age built very much.

It was probably to hide his confusion that Felix dismissed Paul at this time.

26. Of the innocence of Paul, Felix seems to have had no doubt; but avarice had more influence over him than a regard to justice. He might think that Paul, having brought *money* to Jerusalem, and being a distinguished member of a liberal sect, some of the money would have been employed, as money too often was employed in those times, to bribe his judge.

27. This, however, did not avail him, as *the Jews* followed him with their accusations to Rome, where nothing but the interest of his brother with Nero saved him.\*

XXV. 1. We have seen the whole conduct of Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, to the apostle Paul, who had been rescued from the hands of the Jews, and had been two years a prisoner at Cæsarea. It was during this imprisonment that a violent quarrel happened between the Jews in that city and the Gentiles, about the privileges of the city; a quarrel in which many lives were lost, and which inflamed the animosity of both parties, till, from a concurrence of other causes, the Jews broke out into open rebellion against the Romans, about six years from this time, for we are now considering the events of the year sixty or sixty-one.

13. This *Agrippa* is commonly called *the younger*, being the son of the elder Agrippa, who had put James to death, and imprisoned the apostle Peter, and who died in the manner that has been described. [*Ch. xii. 1—23.*] This Agrippa, being only seventeen years old when his father died, the country of Judea was reduced to the form of a Roman province, but he gradually obtained the kingdom of *Chalcis*, the tetrarchies of *Philip* and *Lysanias*, with some towns in Galilee; besides this, he had the ordering of every thing relating to the Temple, and the appointment of the high-priest. It was to the territories of this prince that the Christians retired, on the breaking out of the Jewish war.

*Bernice* was sister to this Agrippa, and suspected of an

\* See *Jos. Antiq. B. xx. Ch. viii. Sect. ix.*; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge*.

incestuous commerce with him.\* She had been married to her uncle, the king of Chalcis, and upon his death to Polemon, king of Cilicia, who had embraced the Jewish religion in order to obtain her, and yet she had now abandoned him.† Afterwards Titus, the Roman emperor, was violently in love with her, and would even have married her, if the people of Rome would have borne it.‡

19. The word *superstition* is not here used in an offensive sense, but only to denote religion in general, for *Festus* could not be supposed to intend an affront to his guest, who was a Jew, and who had paid him a visit out of respect.§

24, 25. The whole proceeding of *Festus* seems to have been fair and impartial; and yet, as Paul was left in his custody, and at his disposal, there seems to have been no reason why a man, of whose innocence he was persuaded, should not have been set at liberty. It appears, however, that Paul's own *appeal to Cæsar* prevented this, and this he had done on seeing that he had no other way of escaping the violence of his enemies.

XXVI. 1. In this chapter we have an account of the discourse of Paul before Festus the Roman governor, in the presence of *Agrippa*, king of a considerable part of the country of the Jews, and of his sister Bernice. The design of it was to give Agrippa an opportunity of hearing Paul, and to enable Festus to give some tolerable account of his prisoner to the Roman emperor, to whom, in consequence of Paul's appeal, he was obliged to send him. Festus being ignorant of the Jewish religion and customs, with which the king was of course well acquainted, might learn from him to form a better judgment in the case.

3. The king was not only acquainted with the Jewish religion,|| but likewise had no particular prejudice against Paul.

5.¶ His mode of religion was the most respectable among

\* To which Juvenal thus refers, alluding to the story of a valuable ring which Agrippa had presented to Bernice:

— “deinde adamas notissimus, et Berenices  
In digito factus pretiosior, hunc dedit olim  
Barbarus incestæ, dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.”

Sat. vi. 155—157.

† See *Jos. Antiq. B. xx. Ch. vii. Sect. iii.*

‡ See *Suet. Tit. Sect. vii.*; *Tacit. Hist. L. ii. ad init.*; *Lardner, I. pp. 28—30*; *Doddridge.*

§ See *Ch. xvii. 22*; *Le Clerc*; *Doddridge.*

|| See *Lardner, I. p. 29*; *Doddridge.*

¶ See *Josephus (War), B. i. Ch. v. Sect. ii.*; *Whitby and Witsius in Doddridge.*



the common people of the Jews; the Sadducees being only a few of the richer sort, who were regarded as Free-thinkers and Libertines, by the nation in general.

8.\* The high-priest, who was at that time Ananias, the son of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, being a Sadducee, and also perhaps the chief of the Sanhedrim, Paul might imagine, or might know, that it was his adherence to the doctrine of the resurrection, which he held in common with the Pharisees, that might contribute to heighten this animosity against him. A Pharisee, like Gamaliel, might think the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of Christ a possible thing, being consonant to their general belief and expectations; but it overturned the whole system of the Sadducees.

9—11. All this Paul urged as an argument of his integrity and zeal for whatever he apprehended to be right; and having been first exerted against Christianity, which his enemies could not deny, would tend to conciliate their goodwill towards him.

14. On these circumstances of the conversion of Paul I have remarked before, when I shewed how far they all are from being favourable to any deception, either with respect to Paul or others. He was then in the height of his zeal against Christianity, his companions all of the same character, the vision at noon-day in their presence, and his conduct afterwards was of the same cast as before; shewing the same ardent, undaunted mind, acting with the same spirit, in a cause which he thought to be right.

17.† It is not probable that Paul understood the full extent of his commission at this time, since it was several years before Peter was instructed to preach to Cornelius, who was the first convert from the proper Gentiles. He probably imagined that he should be the instrument of converting the Gentiles after they were first made proselytes to Judaism.

18.‡ This is a concise view of the great benefits of the gospel. It is to enlighten men's minds with respect to their knowledge of God and a future state, to turn them from vice to virtue, that, being true penitents, they might be received

\* "What! Is it thought impossible that God should raise the dead?" *Bowyer.*

† For "delivering thee," *Le Clerc* translates, "Je vous ai choisi." See his *Note.*

‡ "Receive forgiveness of sins by faith, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." *Bowyer.*

into the favour of God, and made happy hereafter. What is all other knowledge compared to this? and this is what all who believe Christianity are possessed of.

21. The expression implies that they were ready in a tumultuous manner to tear him in pieces, without any form of law.\*

22. He ascribes it to the interposition of Providence by means of the Roman governor, that he was rescued from their hands, and permitted to enjoy a good deal of liberty, which he no doubt made use of in preaching the gospel to all persons that came in his way; and this gospel, he here says, was nothing contrary to the religion of Moses.

24. It is no wonder that *Festus*, who knew nothing of Judaism or Christianity, but, with the learned of his age, considered the former, and of course the latter as a branch of it, as an absurd superstition not worthy of his notice, should imagine that a man, who could make so serious a business of it as Paul did, must have his head turned; and to put the softest construction upon it, he said it was the effect of his deep learning or study.†

26. *Agrippa*, he knew, could not but regard the whole business in a light very different from that in which Festus considered it. With him the religion of the Jews, and every thing that related to it, was a serious thing; and Paul boldly appeals to him as not unacquainted with the transactions of his own times, in which the miracles wrought by Christ and the apostles were peculiarly conspicuous. It is remarkable that Peter, speaking before the Jewish multitude on the day of Pentecost, [*Chap.* ii. 22,] also before the high-priest and the Sanhedrim presently after, and Paul before this tribunal, do not appeal to any particular miracle, or propose the examination of any evidence. This they knew was superfluous, the miracles having been so numerous, that no person living in the country entertained any doubt of them. They only ascribed them to a wrong cause, or without considering their cause, rejected them, because they concluded that nothing contrary to the law of Moses, which they hastily imagined Christianity to be, could be true.

28. The king was evidently staggered with this defence of Christianity, and was unable to reply to it; and therefore made this frank confession of the state of his mind with respect to it.‡

\* "To have killed me with their own hands." *Doddridge*. See his *Note*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Collins's Grounds and Reasons*, p. 172, examined by *Doddridge*.

‡ See *Doddridge*.



29.\* There is great presence of mind, propriety and politeness in this answer of Paul, which might satisfy Festus that he was not a man who was beside himself.

32. Whatever they thought of Paul's doctrine, it is evident they were convinced of his innocence with respect to the accusation of the Jews. The king, however, never became a Christian, at least he never made open profession of Christianity, whatever he might think of it in his own mind; and that he did not think unfavourably of it, may be presumed from this circumstance, that upon the breaking out of the Jewish war, which was within a few years of this time, all the Christians, forewarned by the prophecy of our Saviour, fled from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and took refuge in the territories of this prince, where they remained unmolested; this prince, who had no quarrel with the Romans, favouring them. It is not impossible but that the favour he shewed them might in a great measure be owing to his hearing this discourse of Paul. Also, when *James the Less*, or the brother of our Lord, was put to death by one of the high-priests, which displeased the common people of the Jews, by whom he was much esteemed, he removed him from the high-priesthood, and put another in his place. After the destruction of Jerusalem it is probable that he ended his days at Rome, where it is known that his sister resided. He was the last king of any part of Judea.

XXVII. 1. The apostle Paul having been two years a prisoner at Cæsarea, under the governments of Felix and Festus, and having appealed, as every freeman of Rome had a right to do, to the hearing of the emperor, was accordingly committed to the care of a Roman centurion, along with other prisoners, who were to be sent by sea to Rome.† In this chapter we have an account of this voyage, and it is so circumstantially related, and all the particulars so exactly correspond to the known history, geography and customs, of those times, that if any narrative can be its own voucher, this is so. This, indeed, is the case with the whole of the evangelical history, but more especially with this book of *Acts*, so that to an unprejudiced, attentive reader, sufficiently conversant in the history of those times, it must appear impossible to have been written in any later time; and being immediately published, and universally received, as an authentic history, by those who were the best judges of its authenticity, it is now entitled to as full credit as any history

\* See *Le Cene*, pp. 596—598; *Doddridge*.

† See *Lardner*, I. pp. 236, 237.

whatever. And if the book of Acts contains a faithful, credible account of the promulgation of Christianity, the truth of it cannot be doubted.

2. Perhaps this ship was not intended to take them directly to Rome; and as in those days they seldom sailed far from the coast, and frequently came to land, they might expect to find a ship in some other port that was going directly to Rome. *Adramyttium* was a sea-port in the upper part of the *Ægean Sea*, quite out of the way to Rome; but though the ship belonged to that place, it might be on a voyage in which both Palestine and Rome were included.

This *Aristarchus* was of *Thessalonica* in Macedonia, and had accompanied Paul in his last journey to Jerusalem, carrying the contribution of the Gentile converts of that place to the poor Christians in Judea. He was with Paul at Ephesus, when he was in danger from a tumult there, and he is mentioned in Paul's letters from Rome as a fellow-prisoner, perhaps on account of his close and voluntary attendance upon Paul.\* We find also that in this voyage Paul was accompanied by *Luke*, the writer of this book, from his using the plural number in the whole narrative. Indeed, no other than a passenger in the ship could have described the voyage so particularly as it is here done.

4. It appears, that instead of launching into the Mediterranean Sea, they kept very near the coast, to take the opportunity of getting into a harbour in case of a storm. Now that navigation is better understood, the open sea is deemed much safer than near the coast, in such a case.

5, 6.† This is the second sea-port they touched at, and here they find a ship which was bound from *Alexandria* to *Rome*, which does not appear to have had any business in this place.

8. This was in the island of *Crete*, where, from Paul's epistles, [*Titus* i. 5,] it appears that some time or other he had preached the gospel, and fixed *Titus* there, as he had done *Timothy* at *Ephesus*. When this was, is uncertain, but there was no opportunity of his doing any thing of the kind at this time.

9. *The fast* here spoken of was the only one observed by the Jews.‡ It was the day of *atonement*, which fell about the twenty-fifth of our September, and this was so near

\* See *Ch.* xix. 29; xx. 4; *Col.* iv. 10; *Philemon* 24.

† “*Mupa*, corrupted from *Διμυρα*, the name of a river and of a city in Syria.” *Grotius* in *Bowyer*.

‡ See *Lev.* xxiii. 27, *Vol.* XI, p. 218.



winter that it was reckoned dangerous to be at sea, while navigation was so little understood.\*

10. There is nothing in this opinion but what might have been given by Paul without any particular revelation; but as he had a revelation concerning the event of this voyage, it is not impossible but that he might have some supernatural illumination of this kind in an earlier period of it.

12. This was probably such a wind as, in the same seas, is now called a *Levanter*, being a kind of hurricane, blowing in several directions in a short time.†

16. This was to secure the boat from being staved and destroyed.

17. This [*under-girding*] was getting the ropes quite round the vessel, to prevent it from bursting asunder, a thing that was not unusual in the ancient mode of navigation.‡

*The quicksands* here mentioned were probably those remarkable ones near the coast of Africa, so that they had been driven too much to the south.

24. That is, the lives of all who were in the same ship.

26. This must necessarily have been said by the spirit of prophecy.

27. [*Adria*,] that is, the part of the Mediterranean Sea which is to the west of Sicily and Italy, from which the Gulph of Venice was then called *the Adriatic Gulph*, or a gulph from the Adriatic Sea.

31. Though Paul knew that their lives would be preserved, he likewise knew that God, in order to effect this, would make use of natural means; and there does not appear to have been any miracle, either in the shipwreck, or the escape from it, only the event was such as no man, of himself only, could certainly have foretold.

33. That is, they had taken no regular meal.

39. The word here rendered *shore* sometimes signifies a *sandy shore*, proper for the anchorage of ships.§ In some sense, every creek of the sea must have a shore, as well as the sea itself. That this place was sandy appears from *ver.* 41, where we find that the ship *stuck fast* in it.

40. They *loosened the rudder*, probably to make the best use of it they could in reaching the land.||

41. [*Two seas*,] that is, two currents.

43, 44. Though *the centurion*, with great justice as well

\* See *Doddridge*.

† See *Le Clerc*; *Hallett*, I. pp. 70—74; *Doddridge*; *Bowyer*.

‡ On *vers.* 16, 17, see *Chardin MS.* in *Harmer*, II. p. 496.

§ See *Le Clerc*.

|| See *ibid.*; *Doddridge*.

as humanity, would not suffer the prisoners to be put to death, he ordered them to make the first attempt to land, with a view, no doubt, that the rest of the ship's company might form a better judgment in what manner they should make the attempt themselves. Accordingly, the prisoners *who could swim* had no other advantage, while the rest took boards, and broken pieces of the ship.

XXVIII. In the last chapter we had an account of the voyage in which the apostle Paul was sent a prisoner from Judea to Rome, which terminated in a shipwreck, though without the loss of any life, agreeably to what was predicted by Paul, after a vision in which he had that information.

1. This island is now called *Malta*, in the Mediterranean,\* though there are some who think that it was the island of *Melita*, in the Adriatic Gulph, or Gulph of Venice.

2. The Greeks called all people besides themselves *Barbarians*, including all those who spoke any language different from their own. The people here mentioned are said to have been a colony of Phœnicians, who spoke a language similar to the *Hebrew*. If humanity be a test of civilization, these people were far from being *barbarians* in the usual acceptation of the word.† There are many places, it is to be feared, on the sea-coast of other countries, nominally Christian, in which persons escaping from shipwreck would not have been treated with so much kindness. The benefit which the inhabitants of the sea-coast are allowed to receive from the wreck is too great a temptation to them to endeavour to make it one, by destroying those who may have survived such a calamity.

4. There are few persons so barbarous but they have some notion of a Supreme Being, and an over-ruling Providence. But all mankind are too apt to consider immediate good as a token of Divine approbation, an opinion which is finely refuted in the book of *Job*, and which was also properly checked by our Saviour [*Luke* xiii. 2, 4] with respect to the Galileans killed by Pilate, and those on whom *the tower of Siloam fell*. The present life is only a state of probation, which necessarily requires that good and evil be distributed in a promiscuous manner, for the proper trial of all.

5. That our Saviour's disciples should take up serpents unhurt, was one of the particulars mentioned by him in his

\* See *Doddridge*.

† "The inhabitants were noted for their civility to strangers. See *Diod. Sic. L. v. p. 204, Ed. Steph.*" *Doddridge*.



last address to the apostles before his ascension. (*Mark* xvi. 18; *Luke* x. 19.)

6. This sudden transition from thinking very ill of the apostle, to thinking so highly of him, was quite natural. They justly concluded that there was something supernatural in the case, and the Heathens of that age had a notion that their gods frequently descended upon earth in the form of men. Thus the inhabitants of *Lystra*, [*Chap.* xiv. 11,] took *Paul* and *Barnabas* to be two of their gods, after the cure of the lame man at the gate of their city.

8—10. These benevolent miracles could not fail to give the captain, and the whole ship's company, as well as the inhabitants of the island, a favourable impression of Christianity, and of Paul in particular; and this might probably contribute to his favourable treatment at Rome when he arrived there.

11. *Castor* and *Pollux* were supposed to be the sons of Jupiter, the chief of the Heathen gods. They were particularly invoked in cases of storms. The Greeks and Romans fixed the *signs*, or images, of their gods, both at the heads and sterns of their ships.\*

12. *Syracuse* was the most considerable city in Sicily, and had been one of the most considerable cities in the world.†

13 *Rhegium* is a city in Italy, now called *Reggio*, almost entirely destroyed in the late earthquake. *Puteoli* is a town not far from Naples. Being at that time a considerable place, it is not extraordinary that Christians should be found there. From this place Paul and his company seem to have proceeded by land.

15. *Appii Forum* is about fifty miles from Rome, and *the Three Taverns* about thirty from it. It must have been a great consolation to this apostle in his bonds, to have this mark of respect shewn him by the Christians in Rome, to whom he had written his long epistle about three years before this time.

16. It appears, from other evidence, that the *prefect of the Pretorian guard* was the person to whom prisoners sent from the provinces were delivered. And it is remarkable that, at this particular time, viz. about the year sixty-one after Christ, there was only *one person* in this office, and this was the famous *Burrhus Afranius*, a great favourite with Nero, who was then emperor; whereas, both before and after this time,

\* See *Doddridge*.

† See *Livy*, L. xxv. C. xxxi.; *Doddridge*.

there were two persons in this office, which is a striking circumstance in favour of the credibility of this history.\*

The *soldier* who *kept* Paul was, no doubt, chained to him, one end of the chain being fastened to Paul's right hand, and the other to the soldier's left, according to the custom of those times.

17. Notwithstanding Paul's innocence, and the favourable testimony of the Roman governor Festus, and also of Julius the centurion, who conducted him to Rome, he was not acquitted when he came to the hearing of the emperor, but was ordered to continue a prisoner, though under easy confinement, for *two years*, living *in his own hired house*, [ver. 30,] under the custody of a soldier who was chained to him. At his hearing before the emperor, it appears, by his epistles from Rome, that all his Christian friends, though they had shewn him so much affection as to have gone thirty, and some of them fifty miles to meet him, now deserted him. But, notwithstanding this, he said, [2 Tim. iv. 16, 17,] *the Lord stood by him*, and he was *delivered from the mouth of the lion*, probably meaning Nero, whose savage disposition was by this time sufficiently manifest. It appears, however, that he had friends even in the *household* of the emperor, [Philipp. iv. 22,] and having liberty to see whom he pleased, [ver. 30,] he both preached the gospel while at Rome, and wrote several of his epistles from thence; but one of the first things that he did was to send for the chief of the Jews who were then at Rome, and give an account of himself and his principles to them.

19. † It might have been apprehended that, having been ill-used by his countrymen, he would endeavour to do them some ill-offices, which might have affected *the Jews* at Rome, as well as those in Judea; and at this time the Jewish nation in general were considered with a jealous eye by the Romans, as ready to rise in rebellion, which they actually did in a few years after this.

20. On account of his adherence to the true *Messiah*, and the doctrine of a resurrection through him.

21, 22. There is a greater degree of apparent candour in these Jews than in most of those whom the apostle had met with. But it appears that so early as at this time there was

\* See Lardner, I. p. 237; Doddridge.

† “Sans que j'aye néanmoins dessein d'accuser ma nation, en quoi que ce soit.” *Le Clerc*. “Not that I have a design to accuse my nation of any thing.” Lardner, VI. p. 356. “This sense is very becoming Paul, and was very suitable to his circumstance and situation at that time.” *Ibid.* p. 357.



a general prejudice against Christianity as something dangerous, and proper to be discountenanced, without any distinct idea why it was so. This has always been the case with any *innovation* in religion, though ever so reasonable and for the better, those who from any cause are disinclined to it, finding it their interest to propagate and favour any report to its prejudice. This grew to so great a height against Christianity in general, that we find it a common complaint of Christians, that they were condemned for the *name* only, without any hearing, or examination of their principles; so fully was our Saviour's warning [*Matt. xxiv. 9*] verified, *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*. If nothing else can be said, it is enough with the generality that men's minds are disturbed, and that some unknown change may be made. This was equally objected to the first Christians, to the Reformers from Popery, and to our ancestors the Puritans. *They that turned the world upside down are come hither also*. This should encourage all those whose object it is to restore Christianity to its original purity. They are sure, indeed, to meet with hatred and opposition, but let them behave under it as becomes Christians, and they will have no more reason to repent of their undertaking, than the apostles themselves had in preaching Christianity first.

23. This seems to have been a long and interesting conference; the apostle, no doubt, labouring, as with other Jews, to convince them, from the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.

27. It is remarkable that this passage of *Isaiah* [vi. 9] is quoted many times in the New Testament, by our Saviour and his apostles, as applicable to the character of the Jews in general.\* It is strongly expressive of the great force of prejudice, and there are many cases where it is as much applicable to our own times as to theirs, there being persons on whom the clearest exhibition of truth, with all its evidence, makes as little impression.

31. It appears, from Paul's epistles written from Rome, that many converts were made at this time, and some of them persons of the highest rank. From this place he wrote his *second epistle to Timothy*, those to *Philemon*, to the *Ephesians*, to the *Colossians*, and to the *Hebrews*.†

With the imprisonment at Rome, *Luke*, the writer of this

\* See *Matt. xiii. 14*; *Mark iv. 12*; *Luke viii. 10*; *John xii. 40*; *Rom. xi. 8*. *Doddridge* remarks that these quotations do not conform "exactly, either to the words of the *original*, or of the *Greek version*."

† See *Doddridge*.

book, closes his history; but it seems probable, that after Paul's release from his confinement, which was A. D. 63, he went to Jerusalem, and, after visiting *Ephesus*, *Macedonia* and *Greece*, arrived again in Rome A. D. 64. In this year there was a dreadful fire at Rome, and *Nero*, making a handle of it, began the first Roman persecution of the Christians, as if they had been the incendiaries, though the Heathen historians are far from considering them as having been concerned in it. Indeed, they could not have had any interest in a thing of this nature; and in this persecution it is probable that *Paul*, as well as *Peter*, who is said to have been at Rome at the same time, were apprehended. Peter is said to have been crucified, but Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded. This was either in the latter end of the year 64, or the beginning of 65, one year before the breaking out of the Jewish war.\*

I cannot help observing that, this book closing some years before that war, and being written after the gospel of *Luke*, no doubt can be entertained but that the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by our Saviour, as recorded in that gospel, was written and published some years before the Jewish war, and several more before the full accomplishment of it, in the destruction of the city. Indeed, there is the evidence of all antiquity, that the three first gospels were published, and in general use, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

\* See Vol. VIII. pp. 75, 79—81.

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END OF VOLUME XIII.

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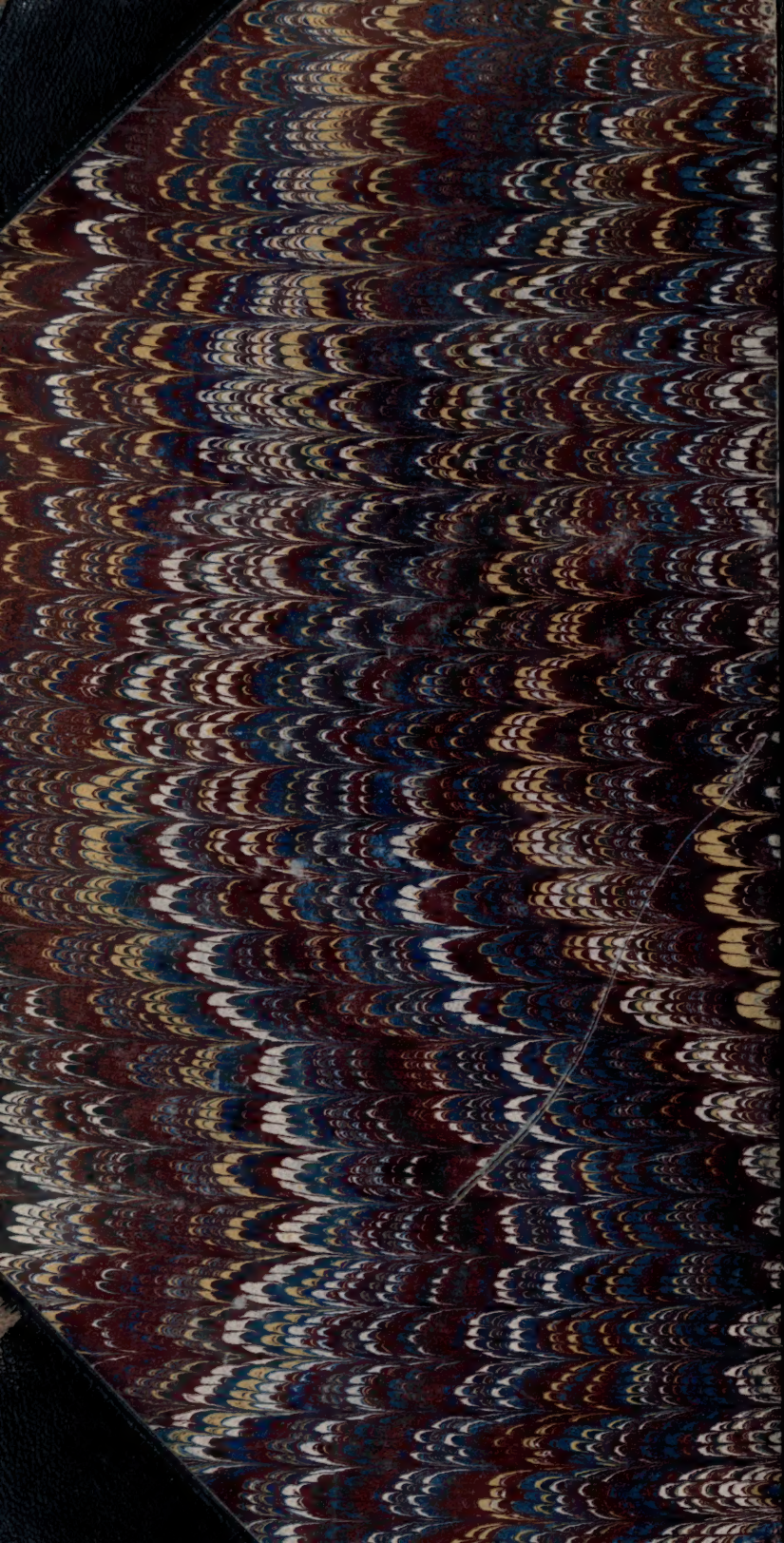
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